

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 13 December 2017 at Chace Community School

Schools Members:

Governors: Mrs J Ellerby (Primary), (Primary), Mrs J Leach (Special), Mrs L Sless (Primary),
Mr T McGee (Secondary), Vacancies x 2 (Primary)

Headteachers: Ms H Thomas (Primary) (Chair), Ms H Ballantine (Primary), *Mr D Bruton (Secondary), Ms M Hurst (Pupil Referral Unit)*, Ms H Knightley (Primary), *Ms K Baptiste (Primary)* – substituted by Ms L Whitaker (Primary), Ms G Weir (Special), Ms M O’Keefe / *Ms T Day* (Secondary)

Academies: *Ms L Dawes (Secondary), Ms A Nicou, Mr A Sadgrove*

Non-Schools Members:

Early Years Provider	Ms A Palmer
16 - 19 Partnership	<i>Mr K Hintz</i>
Teachers’ Committee	Mr J Jacobs
Head of Behaviour Support	Ms C Seery – substituted by Ms D Weston
Education Professional	Ms J Fear
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Vacancy

Observers:

Cabinet Member	<i>Cllr A Orhan</i>
School Business Manager	Ms A Homer
Education Funding Agency	<i>Mr O Jenkins</i>

Also attending:

Assistant Director, Education	Mr J Carrick
Assistant Finance Business Partner	Mrs L McNamara
Resources Development Manager	Mrs S Brown
Resources Development Officer	Ms J Bedford

* Italics denote absence

1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Bruton, Ms Dawes, Ms Hurst, Ms Baptiste, Mr Sadgrove and Ms Nicou.

Noted Ms Baptiste was substituted by Ms Whitaker and Ms Seery by Ms Weston.

Reported:

- The secondary Headteachers had nominated three Headteachers for the two vacant secondary headteacher positions on the Forum. The three secondary Headteachers would share the role and attend the meetings on a rotational basis;
- At the Member Governor Forum meeting, two primary governors had expressed an interest in joining the Forum as governor representatives, but there were no further updates.

Resolved Mrs Sless would pursue and confirm if the two governors were still interested in being on the Forum.

Action: Mrs Sless

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Leach declared an interest in the agenda item for Joint Service for Disabled Children with Special Needs.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

(a) Meeting of 6 November 2017

- (i) **Received** and agreed with the following correction to the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held 6 November 2017, a copy of which is in the minute book.

Reported that minute should read that Ms Kate Osamor, MP had not been proactive or engaged in the campaign to address the funding crisis facing school and the one known involvement she had had was a photo opportunity at a school in her constituency.

It was commented that there was an understanding, where appropriate, communication should only be sent to the constituency MP and not all MPs in the borough.

Resolved information on the financial difficulties facing schools would be reviewed and forwarded to Ms Osamor and / or the other local MPs.

Action: Chair

Clerks Note: Mr Mcgee arrived at this point.

(b) Education Resources Group Meeting of 31 October 2017

Received minutes of the Education Resources Group meeting held on 31 October 2017, a copy of which is in the minute book.

4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION

a) School Budget 2017/18 – Monitoring Update

Received a report with the latest financial projections for the Schools Budget - 2017/18, a copy of which is in the Minute book.

Reported since the last meeting, there had been no change on the amount of DSG available, but the projected overspend had reduced by £50k to £4.5m.

Noted:

- i) The reduction in the overspend was the net effect of:
 - a slight reduction in the funding required for pupils placed in out borough provision,
 - funding required to support new developments at St Marys,
 - an increase in the rate liability for a delay in Lea Valley High School converting to an academy,
 - a delay in the Parent Support Service being able to make the savings required to meet the budget cuts implemented for 2017/18.
- ii) The Forum was required under the regulations to agree to the carry forward of any over or underspends on the DSG. It was stated that the Forum would continue to be provided with regular reports with the latest projections.

The Forum noted the report and the projected overspend.

b) School Funding Arrangements – 2018/19: Responses to Consultation

Received a report detailing the responses received to the proposals for the school funding arrangements for 2018/19; a copy is included in the Minute Book.

Reported following the responses received, the final proposals for the funding arrangements for 2018/19 were outlined in the report. The proposals were in line with the options discussed at the last Forum meeting.

Noted

- i) In response to a query on the low number of responses received, it was stated that the briefing to Headteachers on the proposals had been well attended and the response rate was in line with responses received for previous consultation.
It was commented that this had been discussed at the Education Resources Group. The view of the Group was that Headteachers had appreciated the information and the briefing and were of the view the preferred model for school funding was likely to be implemented.
- ii) Based on the responses, comments received and the Forum's view at the last meeting, it was proposed, subject to resources being available, Model C would be implemented for the local funding formula for mainstream schools.

- iii) The proposals being presented were not based on the total number of responses for each proposal, but on the actual number affected by each proposal.
- iv) In response to a query as to whether the recommendation for the Inclusion Fund addressed the comments raised by the respondent. It was stated that the comments were assessed and the proposals had been amended to reduce the number of Educational Psychologists and increase the number of Area SENCOs to support early years settings.

It was commented that providers had not received and were not aware of the consultation document until it was raised at the Early Years Forum meeting and had two days to respond. It was stated that the proposals were discussed at the November meeting of the Forum, there were two PVI representatives present at this meeting, and the Schools Forum papers were available on the Enfield Website. The consultation document was circulated to all key stakeholders at the same time, but this would matter be investigated.

There was still a concern whether the proposed Education Psychologists would provide the support required by settings. The pressure facing Early Years settings was immense due to the increasing number of pupils with SEND requiring support. This pressure was increased because of limited funding and support available for two year olds with SEND.

Clerks Note: Ms Weir arrived at this point.

- v) There was some discussion on the proposed posts to be funded from the Inclusion Fund and clarity was sought on whether the posts were full or part time and would support all settings; why the rate used to fund additional support for pupils with SEND was set at £4.59 and if this rate was used for all settings. It was remarked £4.59 was not sufficient to obtain additional support.

It was stated that the proposals and arrangements were the same for all settings delivering the free nursery entitlement. The final information on the Budget Settlement was still awaited and this should be available for the next meeting, at which point the Forum will be provided with further information. All proposals, for the coming year, would be subject of a review during the year.

- vi) The Education Resources Group was a Headteacher consultative group and included representatives from schools providing the free nursery entitlement.

Resolved to note the views of the Forum and provide further updates, feedback and information on the Budget position and early years inclusion fund at the next meeting.

Action: Mrs McNamara and Mrs Brown

c) Schools Budget: Update 2018-19

Received a report providing the known information on the School Budget for 2018/19, a copy is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the information presented was based on data from the October Census, but the final allocation would not be known until the Government formally announced the DSG funding settlement for 2018/19 next week.

Noted:

- (i) As reported earlier in the meeting, the DSG overspend would be carried forward into 2018/19 and omitting this, the estimated DSG expected totalled £327.6m. The change in funding was due to an increase in pupil numbers.

It was noted that there was a net increase of 326 pupils and this increase masked, after a number of years, a drop of 24 pupils in the primary sector. As well as the general decline in pupil numbers, maintained primary school saw a further decrease in pupil numbers and new primary academies and free school a corresponding increase. More than 80% of the secondary pupil number increase was seen in new or growing academies and free schools. It was confirmed that officers were working to identify the

reasons for the changes in pupil numbers and whether this was an issue for this year or an on-going trend.

- (ii) The proposals included a reduced Growth Fund of £800k to support new or expanding schools and following consultation the transfer of 0.5% (approximately £1.28m) from the Schools to the High Needs block to support schools with above average numbers of pupils with SEND and EHCPs. It was confirmed the reduced growth fund reflected most new or growing schools moving to receive their funding through the local funding formula.
- (iii) In trying to achieve an in-year balanced position, a minimal contingency for new pupils with EHCPs requiring support had been allowed and consequently a risk it would create a budget pressure during the year.
- (iv) The proposal to continue to provide the current de-delegated central services to maintained schools.
- (v) It was questioned how schools with tight budgets or financial difficulties would be supported. It was stated that this would be covered by an item later on the agenda.
- (vi) There was a need to submit a request to dis-apply the minimum funding guarantee for all through schools. This was to ensure that these schools received the correct funding for the primary pupils and not the higher rates used for secondary aged pupils.

Resolved:

- (i) The Forum agreed to:
 - A Growth Fund of £0.8m for 2018/19 to be funded from the Schools Block;
 - Transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the current arrangements for schools with above average numbers of pupils with SEND and EHCPs costing above £6k;
 - Support the Authority's MFG disapplication request for all through schools to receive the correct funding rates for primary and secondary pupils.
- (ii) The maintained schools representative agreed to continue fund the de-delegated services at the 2017/18 level.

d) Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and Further De-delegation for 2018-19

Received a report summarising the services to be funded from the CSSB and a request for de-delegation of two new services for 2018-19, a copy of the report is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the DfE had created a new CSSB by transferring funding for central services previously funded from the Schools block to the new block. The services included were statutory duties previously provided through the Education Services Grant (ESG) and other historical commitments.

Noted

- i) The DfE were planning to fund the statutory duties based on a national funding formula (NFF). The NFF was based on an amount per pupil and an amount for pupils eligible for FMS. Based on the indicative information provided by the DfE, it was expected funding for statutory duties would reduce by £53k. To manage the reduction, the Authority was planning to cut funding for management and support by £14k and, due to the number of schools converting to academies, to cut funding for the Appeal Service by £30k.
It was confirmed that the reduction in funding for management and support would lead to a member of staff being made redundant.
- ii) There was no change to the funding provided for historical commitments. Due to uncertainty of the on-going effect of the transfer any funding, it was proposed to continue to fund these services at the same level as 2017/18.
- iii) The maintained schools representatives were asked to consider de-delegating funding to enable the Authority to support schools to meet the requirements of the General Data

Protection Regulations (GDPR). The reasons for this request were that the Regulations were a mandatory requirement and schools needed to have arrangements in place to ensure they could meet the requirements of the Regulations when they came into force on 25 May 2018. It was stated that the costs were high in the first year because of the scarcity of employing appropriate staff to support the implementation.

It was confirmed that the de-delegation included all maintained schools and a traded service would be available for academies and free schools to purchase. The service for all schools, academies and free schools would include training.

- iv) Further de-delegation was requested for schools in financial difficulties. The Forum were advised with the cessation of the ESG, the Authority was continuing to support the retained duties for maintained schools previously funded from the ESG, and now gaps in support were being seen, especially supporting schools in financial difficulties; for this reason, it was requested an amount be identified to support schools in this position.

It was questioned how the funding would be allocated and for what purpose. It was stated that previously funding had been provided for similar purposes and a sub-group of the Forum considered and agreed any request for funding. The sub-group had agreed funding to improve IT infrastructure and other school improvements.

There was a discussion of the need to have a rigorous and robust process in place and for the terms of reference to be amended and circulated to reflect this. There was a consensus that the funding should only be provided where the need and outcomes to be achieved were clear. It was suggested that if the de-delegation were agreed, then the summer term Schools Forum meeting would consider circumstances when funding would be allocated.

Resolved:

- (i) The Schools Forum agreed to the services and amounts to be funded from the Central Services Schools block.
- (ii) The maintained schools representatives agreed to de-delegating funding:
- For GDPR
 - Schools in financial difficulties: The use and conditions for use of this fund will be the subject of discussion at the summer term meeting.

Action: Mrs Brown

5. DfE Consultation: Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) under Universal Credit

Received a papers and draft response to the DfE Consultation: Eligibility for FSM under Universal Credit, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the DfE had published a consultation document outlining their arrangements for calculating eligibility for FSM and the Early Years pupil premium following roll out of Universal Credit. The Forum was advised Universal Credit pulled together all benefits and allowances into a single credit and it was proposed that FSM eligibility would be measured not against these benefits or allowances, but on annual net earnings in a household. The new arrangements were due to be implemented from April 2018 where Universal Credit had already been rolled out then there was some protection for pupils currently eligible for FSM.

Noted:

- i) From the proposals, it appeared the threshold for eligibility reduced from £16,190 to £7,400 per annum based on net earnings excluding benefit payments.
- ii) The changes continued to result in less pupils being eligible for FSM.
- Following a discussion, the Forum was concerned of the impact the changes would have for pupils and families living in poverty and these included:
- The changes to eligibility did not supporting pupils living on the threshold of poverty. It was acknowledged that pupils currently receiving FSM would have some protection, but this did not help the impact the changes would have for new pupils;

- Reducing the threshold for FSM eligibility would result in a loss of pupil premium for schools;

iii) The deadline for responding to the Consultation was 11 January 2018.

Resolved the consultation document and draft response would be circulated to all Headteachers and managers of Early Years Sector.

Action: Mrs Brown

6. WORKPLAN

Any additional items arising from the meeting would be added to the workplan.

Action: Mrs Brown

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

a) The date of the next meeting was set as Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 17:30 at Chace Community School

b) Dates for future meetings:

- 07 March 2018 17:30 - 19:30
- 09 May 2018 (Provisional) 17:30 - 19:30
- 11 July 2018 (Provisional) 17:30 – 19:30

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were considered confidential.

The meeting closed at 19:20