

## MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 15 May 2019 at Orchardside School

### **Schools Members:**

Governors: Ms Ellerby (Primary), Ms H Kacouris (Primary), *Mrs J Leach* (Special) substituted by Ms C Davis, Mr J Donnelly (Secondary) , Vacancy (Primary)

Headteachers: Ms H Ballantine (Primary), *Mr D Bruton* (Secondary), *Ms R Datta* (Special), Ms C Fay (PRU), Ms K Baptiste (Primary), Ms M O'Keefe & *Ms T Day* (Secondary) ), Vacancy (Primary)

Academies: Ms H Thomas (Chair) (Primary), Mrs A Goldwater (Primary), Ms A Nicou (Primary), *Mr A Sadgrove* (All through), *Mr C Lamb* (Secondary), Mrs L Sless (Primary),

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### **Non-Schools Members:**

Early Years Provider	<i>Ms A Palmer</i>
16 - 19 Partnership	<i>Mr K Hintz</i>
Teachers' Committee	Mr J Jacobs
Head of Early Years	Mr A Johnson
Education Professional	Ms J Fear
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<i>Cllr S Erbil</i>

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### **Observers:**

Cabinet Member	Cllr R Jewel
School Business Manager	Ms S Mahesh
Education Funding Agency	<i>Ms K Goodacre</i>

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### **Also attending:**

Acting Director, Education	Ms C Seery
Finance Manager	Mrs L McNamara
Head of Inclusion	Ms G Douglas
Headteacher, Durants School	Mr P De Rosa
Early Years Social Inclusion Manager	Ms J Hide
Resources Development Manager	Mrs S Brown
Observer	Ms N Panayiodou
Observer	Ms G Taylor
Observer	Ms T Adnam
Observer	Ms N Husband
Observer	Ms O'Brien

\* Italics denote absence

As the position of Chair of Schools Forum was vacant, Ms Seery opened the meeting.

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

### **a) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Leach, Mr Bruton, Ms Datta, Mr Sadgrove, Mr Lamb, Ms Day, Cllr Erbil, Ms Palmer and Mr Hintz.

Noted Ms Caroline Davies was substituting for Mrs Leach.

### **b) Membership**

#### **Reported:**

- Following conversion of their schools, both Mrs Goldwater and Mrs Sless were now attending the Forum as academy representatives. This change meant there were two primary vacancies for a governor and a Headteacher. Nominations were being sought for these vacancies.
- For the new municipal year, the Council had confirmed that Cllr Rick Jewel as Cabinet member of Children's Services and Cllr Susan Erbil as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Jewel and Cllr Erbil were welcomed to the Forum.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

### **(a) Election of Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2019/20**

Ms Seery invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Schools' Forum.

**Received** a nomination for Ms Thomas from Ms Baptiste and seconded by Ms Ballantyne.

**Resolved** Ms Thomas be elected Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2019/20.

Ms Thomas thanked the Forum and Ms Seery and took over as the Chair.

### **(b) Election of Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2019/20**

**Received** a nomination for Ms Nicou as Vice-Chair from Ms Baptiste and seconded by Ms Ballantyne.

**Resolved** that Mrs Nicou be elected as Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2019/20.

## **4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

**Received** and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held 6 March 2019.

## **5. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION**

### **a) SEND Provision:** Ms Douglas presented this item

**Received** a paper describing the level and type of provision provided to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Enfield and the Outreach provision provided by Special schools to support mainstream schools ; copies of these papers are included in the Minute Book.

Ms Douglas explained the Council's aim was to educate Enfield children and young people (CYP) locally by identifying and providing appropriate provision to meet their needs. The information circulated outlined the different level of provision to meet the needs of CYP. The Council was working with special and mainstream schools to create additional places to address the increasing demand to support pupils with SEND.

#### **Noted:**

- (i) until the additional places required to meet the increasing demand were developed there would still be a need to place pupils in independent and / or out-borough provision;
- (ii) The Outreach enabled mainstream to access valuable support to increase and strengthen knowledge of staff from experts in a variety of areas in special schools.

**Clerk's note: Ms Mahesh arrived at this point.**

### **b) Nurture Groups;** Ms Hide presented this item

**Received** a presentation and paper providing information on Nurture Groups and how they operated to support CYP; a copy is included in the Minute Book.

Ms Hide outlined that Nurture groups were founded on evidence-based practices and offered a short-term, inclusive focused intervention to support for the long term for children with attachment difficulties.

Nurture groups were arranged in classes of between 6 - 12 children or young people in early years, primary or secondary settings supported by the whole staff group and parents. It was recommended that schools had two members of staff running their Nurture group.

Annual assessment of the Nurture groups had been positive, and the impact showed:

- increased knowledge and awareness of attachment across the schools with a group
- increase in parental engagement
- access to professional pathways for Nurture group staff to become SENCOs.

**Clerk's note: Ms McNamara arrived at this point.**

**Noted:**

- (i) It was commented by Forum members that all schools could benefit from the intervention carried out by Nurture groups and that a significant sum of money was being allocated to a small number of schools and it had been some time since the allocation to these schools had not been reviewed.

It was stated that the aim had been to expand the number of Nurture groups, but this development had to be curtailed due to the wider school funding reforms.

- (ii) In response to a query, the Forum was advised that the occupancy information provided to the Forum was based on a fixed point in time. Each Nurture Group had between 6 - 12 pupils at any one time and each pupil generally remained in the group between 2 - 4 terms. Due to the nature of the provision, there was constant movement of pupils and the number of pupils at any one time varied accordingly.
- (iii) The Forum's view was that Nurture Group provision should be reviewed and consideration be given to how the provision could be made available to all schools and be more cost effective. In the meantime, schools with Nurture Groups will be given notice of the review and the possibility of funding changes from 2020/21.

It was stated that the cost of a Nurture Group was lower than the funding required for the Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs). Officers would consider how Nurture groups could be developed to increase the reach of this provision.

**Resolved** to note the Forum's comments and consider options for further developing Nurture groups.

**Action: Ms Hide**

**Clerk's note: Ms Hide left at this point.**

- c) **Durants School;** Mr DeRosa presented this item

**Received** a paper summarising the needs profile of pupils at Durants School; a copy is included in the Minute Book.

Mr DeRosa began by informing the Forum that the needs of pupils at Durants had changed over the years from pupils with a range of needs to a school with predominantly pupils with autism. The staff had accordingly developed their skills to manage pupils with high level of autism. With the increasing level of need, the pupil/teacher ratio had reduced but the learning support assistant (LSA) ratio had increased. This change was to ensure that the school met health and safety requirements for both pupils and staff.

Mr DeRosa went on to explain that the needs exhibited by pupils were very complex and if these were placed in independent provision then the cost would be considerably higher.

Due to this high need, a significant number of pupils required 1:1 or 1:2 support. For 2018/19, the school had received additional funding: £100k outreach and £150k for three additional pupils. Currently, without additional support, the school was projecting for 2019/20 an in-year deficit £300k and for year-end a deficit of £100k. To set a balanced budget, the school had to consider savings options: the concern was that these options would lead to health and safety risks for both staff and pupils.

**Noted:**

- (i) Currently, the School has 110 pupils and requires £100k to continue to employ four or five LSA to support safely 20 pupils, full time. The Forum was concerned about the legalities and the issue of equality if these pupils moved to a part time timetable and the impact this would cause for the pupils and their families, other pupils and staff.

It was questioned whether cutting places was the only way and whether other options had been explored, i.e. lettings. Mr DeRosa confirmed other options were being considered and other possibilities might be available when both Minchenden and Durants sites are fully operational.

It was suggested the school could consider seconding staff to other schools in Enfield. The staff are highly skilled, and their SEND expertise and knowledge should remain and benefit Enfield CYP if possible.

- (ii) The Council was working on ensuring on CPY remained in Enfield by creating additional places and the development of Minchenden would create an additional 100 places. There were a number of challenges being faced and these included:

- It was taking time to create places, so pupils had to be placed out of borough;
- Additional spending to increase the in-borough provision and continuing to use out-borough for new placements, so the planned savings had yet to be achieved therefore not reducing the financial pressure on the high needs block.
- When the places became available at Minchenden, this should provide an opportunity to bring back pupils during appropriate transition points. To enable this to happen, officers will start working with parents to discuss the possibility of moving children back to in-borough provision. The discussion and any move had to be part of a planned and managed process involving the pupils and their families.

There are about 200-250 pupils placed out of borough who could be placed in-borough if places were available.

- (iii) It was suggested consideration be given to a collective campaign to highlight the fact that there is insufficient funding for education. Each school sector, and other public services supporting schools, were reporting difficulties in managing within the resources available. The same conversations are happening across the country. CYP were not able to access specialist provision such as CAMHS. Education is at a crisis point and that consideration be given to setting a deficit budget.

It was stated that the Authority had to work within the financial regulations, which precluded the setting of a deficit budget without an appropriate action plan to address the deficit. The aim of the discussion at this meeting was to begin the review process to inform the new financial year. Any changes to the current arrangements had to be fair and the rationale for change should support all schools and be financially sustainable. It was important to move away from having agreements with individual schools.

The Forum was advised that Mr Charalambous, MP was working with schools in Southgate on the funding issues. He had arranged for representatives from these schools to meet Mr Nick Gibbs. It was noted that now Durants School had a site in Southgate that Mr DeRosa could join this meeting;

A member advised that it was important to understand the consequences of setting a deficit budget without a plan to address the deficit and the Forum needs to be mindful of the advice being given by officers.

**Resolved** to note the Forum comments and views on areas to be developed.

**d) Advisory Service for Autism – Update**

**Received** a brief update on a monitoring visit of the Advisory Service for Autism (ASA); a copy is included in the Minute Book.

Ms Douglas reported that Mr Bruton and she had visited Russet House and met with Headteacher and Lead Teacher. They had been informed that the ASA had been reviewed independently and the School had developed an action plan to address the findings from the review.

The work that had, and was, underway to improve the service was very good and their view was that Russet House should continue to be commissioned to provide the ASA until 2021. Mr Bruton was happy to continue to monitor the Service during this period.

**Noted:**

- (i) The ASA had reported an underspend of £110k and it was recommended this be clawed back and added to the High Needs block for an alternative use.

It was remarked that the funding could be used to support training for teachers to increase their skills in supporting pupils with attachment, autism, and other SEND needs.

- (ii) In response to a question from the Forum, it was confirmed that the total budget for the ASA and the outreach provision provided by special schools was approximately £700k. Each school would normally be required to complete an evaluation, and this would include information on outcomes achieved. The evaluation had not been carried out last year and was pending for this year:

The outreach information circulated with the Forum papers was in response to a request from primary schools to have clarity on who provided the service and how it could be accessed.

The Forum was advised that schools did advertise, and some were more proactive than others in this area.

It was suggested that the outreach service should be reviewed in the same as the ASA. This could be achieved by having a clear timetable with dates of the service reviews and information on the outreach programme to be provided for the forthcoming year. It was stated that this information would be added to the new Schools Communication & Resources website: the details of this site were circulated to all users of the School Portal just before the Easter break.

**Resolved** to note and support the final proposals for the budget for 2019/20.

**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 10 July 2019 at 17:30 at Chace Community School.
- b) Dates for future meetings:

Dates	Time	Venue
2 October 2019	17:30 - 19:30	
11 December 2019	17:30 - 19:30	
15 January 2020	17:30 - 19:30	
4 March 2020	17:30 - 19:30	

**8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items were considered confidential. The meeting closed at 7.30pm.