

**MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING**  
**Held on Wednesday, 14 July at 17:30 on Microsoft Teams**

**Schools' Members**

**Governors:**

Mr J Ellis	Primary
<i>Mr T Hellings *</i>	Primary
Ms H Kacouris	Primary
Ms C Davies *	Special
Mr J Donnelly	Secondary

**Headteachers**

Ms T Day	Secondary
Ms K Baptiste	Primary
Ms C Fay	Pupil Referral Unit
<i>Ms N Husband*</i>	Primary
Ms M O'Keeffe	Secondary
Mr D Smart	Primary
Ms G Taylor	Special

**Academies:**

Ms H Thomas (Chair)  
Ms S Ellingham  
Mr M Lewis  
Ms A Nicou  
Ms Z Thompson  
Ms K Turnpenney \*

**Non-School Members**

Mr K Hintz	16-19 Partnership
Ms A Palmer *	Early Years Provider
Mr T Cuffaro	Teachers' Committee
Mr A Johnson *	Education Professional
Ms J Fear	Head of Admissions
Cllr S Erbil *	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>Observers</b>	
Cllr M Uddin *	Cabinet Member
Mr G Nicolini *	Education & Skills Funding Agency

**Also present:**

Mr P Nathan, Director of Education  
Mr N Goddard, Head of Budget Challenge  
Mrs L McNamara, Finance Manager  
Mrs S Brown, Education Resources Manager  
Mr N Best, Head of Education Strategic Resourcing and Partnerships  
Mr A Farmiloe, Clerk

**Clerk's Notes**

Mr Lewis arrived at 17:34  
Ms Ellingham arrived at 17:36  
Ms Taylor arrived at 17:40  
Ms Thompson arrived at 17:44  
Mr Hintz left at 17:21  
Ms Thompson left at 18:53  
John Ellis left at 18:54  
Mr Smart left at 18:57

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

(a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Hellings, Ms Husband, Ms Turnpenney Cllr Uddin and Mr Johnson.

Noted the absence of Ms Dawes, Cllr Erbil and Ms Palmer.

(b) Membership

**REPORTED** Ms Baptiste and Ms Kacouris terms of office were due to finish at the end of the Autumn term 2021 and both were primary school representatives. Due to the change in pupil numbers, this would leave one vacancy for a primary school representative and another for an academy representative. The Forum was asked to consider whether the primary vacancy should be filled with a governor or headteacher.

The Forum considered if it was acceptable, then it might be helpful to fill the vacancy with a primary Headteacher. Ms Kacouris stated that she was happy to step down and enable either Ms Baptiste or another headteacher to be a member of the Forum.

Ms Baptiste confirmed that she was happy to continue to be a member of the Forum.

**RESOLVED** that Ms Baptiste remain on the Schools Forum as a primary representative and the Enfield Primary Headteachers' Association be advised accordingly.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN & MR SMART**

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members were invited to identify any personal or prejudicial interests relevant to items on the agenda. No declarations were received.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**RECEIVED** the Minutes of the School Forum meeting held on 12 May 2021.

**NOTED** that:

- (a) the Minutes were a correct record of the meeting.
- (b) there were no matters arising from the Minutes which were not addressed in items on the Agenda.

4. ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

(a) DSG Budget Outturn Report 2020/21

This item was presented by Ms McNamara.

**RECEIVED** the DSG Budget Outturn Report 2020/21.

**REPORTED** that the report detailed the final position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the year ending 31 March 2021. The cumulative deficit balance brought forward into 2020/21 was £4.5m.

The DSG budget was monitored on a monthly basis and variances were presented to the Forum. The final position was an overall deficit of £8.05m and with the post year-end adjustments expected to rise to £9m. The adjustments related to funds recouped from a primary school for an advance payment. In addition, possible recoupment from the Early Years block for the low take of nursery provision because of the Covid pandemic.

**NOTED**

- (i) Other variances included an increase in spend in the latter part of the year to support exceptional needs in mainstream schools and Post 16 High Needs
- (ii) The Forum was advised that expenditure on High Needs was expected to increase in the short term and the cumulative deficit may reach £12 million by the end of 2021/22, however with the interventions being put in place, the expectation was that expenditure should reduce thereafter. The budget will continue to be monitored.
- (iii) In reply to a **question**, it was agreed that quarterly variance columns would be included in the information presented.

**ACTION: MRS MCNAMARA**

(b) School Balances 2020/21

**RECEIVED** the Maintained School Balances 2020.

**REPORTED** that

(i) School balances

The total balances held by schools as at 31 March 2021 was **-£242k** (including community facilities). The balances held by secondary increased by £2.248m, primary by £0.358m and special schools by £0.396m. The report included information on the net movement of balances between 2019/20 and 2020/21 across the three sectors and other data analysis.

**NOTED**

- A. All sectors had seen an increase in balances with secondary schools seeing the biggest in-year increase with the deficit reducing from **-£7.102m** to **-£4.795m** at year-end with the range of balances narrowing.
- B. A number of factors were responsible for the change in balances including the impact of the pandemic and the move to online lessons.
- C. The threshold for primary and special schools to submit a request to retain balances had been reduced from 8% in 2019/20 to 6.5% for 2020/21. The number of schools reporting a surplus above 6.5% had increased.
- D. Two primary and one special school had submitted a request to retain surplus balances in the spring term. The returns at year end from the remaining six schools were discussed with the Education Resources Group and it was recommended that the surplus balances should not be recycled from these schools with the exception of one school. It was recommended an underspend of £56k reported by West Lea school for the Home and Hospital Service be clawed back because the School was commissioned to deliver this service.

**RESOLVED** to note and approve recycling of the £56k of surplus balance from West Lea for the Home and Hospital Service.

**ACTION: MRS MCNAMARA**

- E The Forum was reminded that the threshold for primary and special schools to submit a request to retain balances would further reduce to 5% for 2021/22.

The Forum noted the deficit reported as part of the outturn for 2020/21.

(ii) Schools in deficit

**NOTED**

- A. The number of schools reporting a deficit had reduced from 16 in 2019/20 to 13 in 2020/21. For 2021/22, 13 schools were reporting a deficit and a number of others predicting a deficit in year 2 or 3 in their 3 year budget plans.
- B. The LA was continuing to follow the process agreed regarding schools in deficit. As well as the update in the report, the Forum was advised that a key element was the training programme devised and detailed in the report to support schools. It was requested to consider whether Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Chairs of Resources and School Business Managers be required to attend.

**RESOLVED** that the Schools Forum maintained schools representatives supported the proposal that all maintained schools be expected to attend if not all, then must attend the three year budget planning, benchmarking tool and interactive tool training sessions.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN & MAINTAINED SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES**

(iii) Pupil numbers

**REPORTED**

- A. The October 2020 Census confirmed the continuing decline in overall pupil numbers. The reduction in primary school numbers was notable in the years 2019 and 2020. It was a concern that the reduction in primary pupil numbers would in due course impact the secondary numbers.
- B. There were probably a number of factors for this change including the effect of welfare benefit reforms and departing from the European Union among others. In discussion, the following **questions** and comments were made:

**NOTED**

- To manage the change some schools were reducing their PAN;
- It was commented schools with fall in pupil numbers should manage the change and not incur an increasingly large deficit year on year;
- It was stated that further information would be provided to show the change in pupil numbers across the various year groups;
- The reasons for the reduction in pupil numbers was not entirely clear but could include a reduction in the birth rate, impact of departing from the European union and families leaving London. Further analysis of the School Census would be carried out;
- The rate of reduction in pupil numbers for Reception for London was 6-7% whereas for Enfield the figure was 12%. This change was likely to impact upon secondary pupil numbers possibly in two - three years' time;  
Other local factors, which could result in variances included local housing development that might actually result in increased "child yield";
- Pupil numbers were likely to vary from school to school with one school having rising numbers and another in the same locality experiencing a reduction for any number of reasons;
- The Admission and Pupil Planning Board had been set up to work collaboratively with headteachers on pupil numbers; the aim was to be open and transparent.

The Forum noted the update on schools balances.

(c) School Funding Arrangements 2022/23

**RECEIVED** the School Funding Arrangements Report 2022/23.

**REPORTED** the update and proposals outlined in the report were likely to be affected from 2023/24 following the result of the recent Consultation referred to later. The DfE had confirmed for 2022/23 no significant change was expected. The updates included:

(i) Pupils in Mainstream Schools with EHCPs

**REPORTED** for 2021/22, following consultation with schools and approval by Schools Forum, 0.5% (£1.367m) was transferred from the Schools to the High Needs Block. This money was used to allocate funding for element 2 (£6ks) to eligible schools up to the total amount of the transfer. It was recommended that until the outcomes from the SEND Reforms and Call for Evidence were published that the 0.5% continue to be transferred.

The Forum's views were being sought as to whether to consult on the transfer of 0.5% from Schools to High Needs block for 2022/23.

**NOTED**

- A. It was commented until there was clarity the current arrangements be maintained.

- B. In response to a **question**, it was stated that it was perceived there was unfairness in the system for funding high needs. The allocation of funding varied within London and between local authorities nationally.
- C. The LA had developed a local Funding Calculator, which should reflect actual costs and enable adjustments to reflect any changes to be made, such as hourly pay rates. Due to low number of EHCPs received from the pilot schools, the Local Authority's was recommending the pilot be extended to the other schools and a review be carried out later in the Autumn / early Spring term.

**RESOLVED** the Schools Forum supported the recommendation to consult on the transfer of 0.5%.

(ii) Nurture Groups

**REPORTED** following the review of Nurture Groups commissioning, the current full time Nurture Groups had been decommissioned and new Nurture Groups had been commissioned on a part time basis. The overall funding available for Nurture Groups enabled up to 27 groups to be commissioned and also provide a central outreach service.

The Forum was advised that eligible schools had been invited to bid. The uptake had been lower than expected, with only 16 schools bidding for a group. Officers had considered a number of options and following a discussion with the Education Resources Group, it was proposed that the LA should work with the 16 schools commissioned to host Nurture Groups and other eligible schools in order to support and encourage more schools to host a Nurture Group.

(iii) Special Units

**REPORTED** with the increasing demand for supporting pupils with autism and speech, language & communication needs, the LA was working with a partnership between De Bohun and Oaktree Schools to develop a Special Unit. The partnership required De Bohun to be supported by Oaktree. As part of the pilot the schools would provide feedback to the LA on progress, challenges and successes. Other schools had shown an interest in hosting a Special Unit. Depending upon the feedback, officers would then work with other schools to host a Special Unit, so resulting in Units across the borough, thus reducing need to develop new special school places.

(iv) Place Funding – Special Schools and PRU

**REPORTED** it had been agreed that a review of special school place funding would be carried out during 2021/22. An independent Consultant had been commissioned to carry out an initial review of the place funding arrangements and the financial position of each special school. The findings from that review had been presented at the previous meeting of the Schools Forum and it revealed considerable inconsistencies in how each school used the resources provided from the HNB. However, a methodology was required to assess the appropriateness of the current place funding and the types of needs being supported at each school. Another independent Consultant had been engaged to test the findings against an appraisal of the pupils in each school and their needs.

**RESOLVED** feedback would be provided to the Schools Forum in the Autumn term.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN**

(v) Outreach

**REPORTED** the special school place funding review had highlighted that four schools received £112k to provide an outreach service and for one of these schools the funding was included in the money provided to the Enfield Advisory Service for Autism. The other schools provided services to mainstream schools. However, the funding was not ring fenced solely to outreach, so possibly was being treated as delegated funding, nor monitored by the LA and the schools were potentially retaining any unspent allocations. It was proposed that the three schools currently funded to provide an outreach service be advised that the funding will cease at the end of the next academic year (2021/22) and a new criteria and process be developed during the next academic year.

**NOTED**

- A. In reply to a **question**, it was stated that it was not clear whether the schools were or not providing the services.
- B. As this provision had not been reviewed for a number of years, it was commented that it was important to have a clear process and schools should be held accountable for commissioned services.
- C. It was requested that the review process involves special school headteachers.

**RESOLVED** to support the proposal to cease funding for outreach at the next academic year (2021/22) and to develop criteria and process during the year.

(vi) High Needs Block: Alternative Provision

**REPORTED** It had been agreed at the Schools Forum in March 2021 that Alternative Provision be considered as an area of review.

**NOTED** a sub-group of key stakeholders had been set up and a consultant was being engaged to carry out an independent review.

(vii) Early Years Block: Inclusion Fund

**REPORTED** due to some changes to the regulations governing the Inclusion Fund. Officers were assessing the regulations and the outcomes from the assessment would be presented to Forum in the Autumn term.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN**

(d) Mainstream Schools Funding Consultation 2023/24

**RECEIVED** a PowerPoint presentation on the Mainstream School Funding Consultation.

**REPORTED** that:

- (i) The DfE had published the consultation on 8 July 2021 and the deadline for responses was 30 September 2021 and therefore before the next meeting of the Forum. The consultation was proposing a fundamental change to the basis of school funding. It would potentially remove local authorities responsibilities for managing and allocating funding to schools in their area. The National Funding Formula (NFF) would operate to allocate funding directly to maintained schools. The new process would be similar as that applied currently to Pupil Premium and possibly no local flexibility in the allocation of funds. The consultation was seeking to implement the changes from 2023/24.
- (ii) There were also proposals for the NFF to allocate funding for growth and falling rolls. The treatment of PFI and split sites was still under review. The consultation also stated:
  - the Government's aim to increase academisation;

- De-delegation would be limited to specific areas;
  - Statutory functions would be reviewed;
  - Licenses would continue to be funded by the DfE;
  - Historic commitments to support central services would cease with a grant to replace unavoidable costs e.g. Prudential Borrowing.
- (iii) The outcome of the SEND Reform Consultation was awaited. There would be a further consultation on a mechanism to support schools with EHCPs and a review of the block transfer, i.e. 0.5%.
- (iv) The consultation was also seeking views on maintained schools in future being funded on an academic year basis.

**NOTED** in response to **questions** and ensuing discussion that:

- (i) Despite calls from local authority education departments not to do so, the funding consultation was an example of government consulting during the August holidays.
- (ii) The purchasing power afforded to maintained schools by centralised funding should be recognised.
- (iii) The change to funding on an academic year basis was likely to create an additional burden for maintained schools and LAs.
- (iii) In view of the deadline for responses and despite the lack of a meeting of the Forum before then, the Chair would endeavour to formulate a collective response and to work with Mr Smart to prepare a letter and possibly of convening a special meeting of the Forum in September.

**ACTION: CHAIR AND MRS BROWN**

(e) De-Delegated Services for Maintained Schools for 2021/22 and 2022/23

**RECEIVED** a report on De-Delegated Services For Maintained Schools for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

**REPORTED** that the report provided an update on the current position with regards de-delegated services.

The maintained school representatives were informed that the cessation of de-delegation for long service awards by primary schools was becoming an issue. It was creating an inequity between Council and maintained school staff. This issue had been raised with the Education Resources Group and it had been confirmed that secondary schools would continue to support long service awards and primary headteachers on the Group would discuss this with their primary colleagues.

The Forum was informed that the issue regarding long service awards had been discussed with primary colleagues. The primary representatives advised that primary colleagues had confirmed that they would continue to support long service awards.

Other updates included:

**NOTED**

- (i) The Forum were advised that the SLA for union duties was being drawn up by union representatives.
- (iii) A new permanent Data Protection Officer (DPO) had started and would be joined by a Deputy DPO.

(iii) The services available for de-delegation in 2022/23 were noted.

**RESOLVED** that the Schools Forum maintained school representatives agreed with the option to reinstate de-delegation for long service awards in order to retain equity between staff working for the Council and schools. The Chair would consider further with Mr Smart and the matter would be brought back in the Autumn when maintained schools representatives would be asked to confirm services to be de-delegated for 2022/23.

**ACTION: CHAIR AND MRS BROWN**

**5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Annual Audit for Maintained Schools

**NOTED** the 2020/21 Annual School Audit Report of June 2021 from the LA to all Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and Chairs of Financial Resources.

**6. FUTURE MEETINGS**

(a) The date of next meeting of the Forum was Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 5.30pm. The meeting would be virtual. Whether meetings thereafter should be virtual or physical, or combined, should be considered at a later date.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN**

(b) **NOTED** the dates of future meetings as detailed below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
19/01/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
09/03/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
11/05/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
06/07/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
05/10/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
07/12/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC

**7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

Meeting finished at 19.15.