

# Schools Forum

## Minutes

Tuesday 21 May 2019

### **PRESENT**

#### **Schools Forum Members:**

Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair)  
Claire Fletcher, St Paul's CE Primary  
Wayne Leeming, Melcombe Primary  
Daisy Armstrong, Avonmore (Governor)  
Dave Anderson, NEU  
Michelle Barrett, Randolph Beresford EYC/Vanessa Nursery (Headteacher)  
Clare Wagner, West London Free School (Headteacher)  
Alan Campbell, Cambridge School  
Jane Gleasure, Little People's Nursery (PVI)  
Tim Scott, Fulham College Academy Trust  
Giles Finnemore, Brackenbury Primary School  
Aiden Smith, Jack Tizard  
Francesca Smith, Jack Tizard (Headteacher)  
Jo Grenfell, Jack Tizard (Business Manager)  
Alex Parker, Lady Margaret School  
Jessica Mair, John Betts (Headteacher)  
Katie Brown, Trade Union representative

#### **LBHF Officers:**

Steve Miley, Director of Children's Services  
Mandy Lawson, Assistant Director of SEND  
Tony Burton, Head of Finance for Children's Services

### **1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Jana Hassan of Harmony Nursery.

### **3. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2018-19**

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services, LBHF) presented the report that updated the Schools Forum on the 2018/19 final outturn position after updates to the allocation received in March 2019 from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The report set out the actual variances in each of the blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2018/19.

Tony reported that they had managed to retain the balance of the budget on the Schools Block, which had been discussed at the previous Forum in March. They had agreed to carry the underspend forward to 19/20 as a contingency for maintained schools. On the Early Years block there had been overspend across the different funding streams, though there were favourable adjustments for 18/19, the contingency had been agreed for 19/20. Tony reported that assumptions had been made on activity which produced some degree of risk, although he didn't believe the overspend would be significant.

#### **4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2019-20 UPDATE**

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services, LBHF) presented an updated report on the 2019/20 Schools Budget process since the last Forum in March 2019. Under the Central Services Schools Block (CSSB), there had been an increase in 19/20 so they were looking to reduce the spend. Steve Miley (Director of Children's Services) commented that the budget was higher than other Local Authorities.

The Chair asked that potential dates for the workshops be sent to headteachers.

**ACTION: Tony Burton**

It was reported that there was deterioration in the High Needs Blocks due to an increase in billing during the 17/18 period – though this had been partly offset by the central services block. Tony Burton was asked if the work was based on the tri-borough model which he clarified as being mixed. He confirmed that the time limit for invoicing was 2 years.

#### **5. PROPOSED TOP-UP FUNDING INCREASE FOR JACK TIZARD SPECIAL SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER 2019**

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services, LBHF) presented the report that informed members of the 2018/19 outturn and forecast for 2019/20 with a view to recommending and agreeing a request to increase top-up rates for pupils attending the school, given the context of the High Needs Block deficit.

The current deficit of the school was £428,000 per year and top up rates would have to increase by £30,957 per year for both H&F and out of borough pupils. The earliest implementation date would be the Autumn term 2019, as other Councils would have to be informed of the increases. It was proposed that the £240,000 overpayment to the school in 2017/18 and 18/19 would not be recovered. A representative of Jack Tizard School added that other boroughs were already aware of the situation and there had been no complaints about the proposed increase.

Discussion took place on the restructuring of the Queen's Manor building, with one member asking if Queen Manor and Jack Tizard could liaise to

increase income. Mandy Lawson (Assistant Director of SEND, LBHF) responded that they required clarification of the borough's needs as this was a big piece of work to undertake. The Chair advised looking at Section 106 as a possible resolution and requested an update at the next Schools Forum meeting.

**ACTION: Tony Burton**

## **RESOLVED**

1. Schools Forum considered and agreed to a top-up funding rate increase of £6,475 for Jack Tizard Special School, which will take annual top-up rates to £30,957. This will be implemented from Autumn 2019 onwards.
2. Schools Forum agreed to the non-recovery of £240,000 of place funding (from 2017/18 and 2018/19) ahead of increases to top-up rates in Autumn 2019.

## **6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK STRATEGY - VERBAL UPDATE AND DISCUSSION**

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services, LBHF) summarised the High Needs Block situation and reported that the cumulative deficit was above the recommended threshold, requiring the Council to submit a recovery plan to the ESFA. Tony confirmed this would be done after the next Schools Forum meeting. The Chair commented that Forum members needed more understanding of the plan before it was submitted.

Mandy Lawson (Assistant Director of SEND, LBHF) gave an update on SEND funding, citing a need to move towards a model of more early intervention and support. Speech & language therapy funding needed rethinking, and medical needs units were currently undergoing remodelling work. The Chair asked if this work could be shared. Mandy confirmed that it had been, but she would recirculate after the meeting.

**ACTION: Mandy Lawson**

Mandy Lawson added that she was liaising with members about keeping children in mainstream schooling, preventing unnecessary escalation. They were also investigating support for 16-25 admissions and how each individual would be funded.

The Chair suggested providing a briefing at a future meeting.

**ACTION: Mandy Lawson**

## **7. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME**

The draft work programme was presented for information and was noted.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Maintained Schools Contingency**

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services, LBHF) tabled a paper

on the principle of using the maintained schools contingency funding to support smaller maintained schools in H&F. Schools Forum offered broad support for the proposals in principle.

The following points questions were raised:

- Which schools stand to benefit from the proposals and to what value?
- Noted that some moves occurred in the Autumn term 2018 following the schools census.
- It was requested that modelling be undertaken to determine the cost of supporting moves since the Autumn census date.

The Chair asked that the paper and analysis of detail be considered at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Tony Burton**

### **BACS Rollout**

There was a trial rollout of using BACS functionality in five schools, including William Morris, Brackenbury and Holy Cross. The Chair requested this be completed by the end of the academic year.

**ACTION: Tony Burton**

Chair .....

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*Note: This meeting was clerked by Tracey Chin*