

Schools Forum

Minutes

Thursday, 2nd November 2017

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	5 Members		
Primary Head	Claire Fletcher (CF)	St Paul's CE Primary School	Absent
Primary Head	Wayne Leeming (WL)	Melcombe Primary School	Absent
Primary Head	Kathleen Williams (KW)	Holy Cross RC Primary School	Absent
Primary Governor	Daisy Armstrong (DA)	Avonmore Primary School	Present
Primary Governor	Sharon Robinson (SR)	John Betts Primary School	Present
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Vacancy		
Academies	5 members		
Secondary Non Recoupment Academy Principal	Gary Kynaston (GK)	Hammersmith Academy	Absent
Secondary Recoupment Academy Head			
Secondary Recoupment Academy	Vacancy		
Secondary Recoupment Academy (Observer)	Peter Haylock (PH)	Fulham College Trust	Present
Primary Academy	Vacancy		
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Michele Barrett (MB)	Vanessa/Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre School	Present
Special Schools	1 member		
Special Schools Head	Francesca Smith Welsh (FSW)	Jack Tizard School	Apologies
	Freddie Adu (FA) - attending in place of FSW	Queensmill School	Present
Alternative Provision	1 member		
Alternative Provision Rep	Nathan Crawley-Lyons (NCL)	TBAP	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
	Jane Gleasure (JG)	Little People	Apologies
14-19 Representative	1 member		
	Vacant		
School Business Manager	2 observers		
Primary (Maintained)	Giles Finemore (GF)	Brackenbury Primary School	Present
Secondary (Academy)	Tim Scott (TS)	Fulham College Trust	Present
Trade Union	1 observer		
	Katie Brown (KB)	NUT	Present
Officers in Attendance			
Tri Borough Director of Finance & Resources	Dave McNamara (DM)	Tri Borough Children's Services	Present
Education Finance	Lize Ferreira (LF)	Tri-Borough Children's Services	Present
Finance Director	Remi Oladapo (RO)	3BM Limited	Present
Observers			
Procurator	Robert Jones (RJ)	The London Oratory School	Present
Clerk	Amanda Price (AP)	Tri Borough Children's Services	Present

INTRODUCTION

PH was elected to continue as Chair of the Schools Forum for this academic year. Introductions were made and PH welcomed GF who had replaced Tara McLaughlin as the School Business Manager observer for maintained primary schools.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jane Gleasure and Ian Heggs had sent their apologies. Freddie Adu was attending in place of Francesca Smith Welsh as the representative for special schools.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

De-Delegation Funding – This item was deferred to the next meeting.

External Review of SEN Provision – Due to the amount of work involved following this review, this item may need to be returned to at a later date. Regarding recommendation 6.3.4 in the minutes, clarification is needed as the review paper was not present for this item to be considered.

RESOLVED: Agenda item for future meeting.

5. DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT MONITORING 2017/18

DM referred to the report A2 circulated with the agenda.

- The forecast at this stage is pessimistic. Finance continues to collate information being provided by schools and anticipates that figures presented at the next Schools Forum will be more accurate.
- There are issues around the High Needs Block (HNB), which has a projected overspend of £3.8m. LF believes this is more than last year but will provide comparative figures from last year for the next meeting.
- The Schools Block has an anticipated overspend of £422k. Schools in financial difficulties make a significant contribution to this overspend (£200k).
- There is no projected overspend in the Early Years Block.
- Despite it looking like the funding situation for LBHF is worsening, DM advised that it is similar to last year and it could actually be better, despite additional pressures, eg, from post 16.
- LF advised that last year's position may have appeared better due to the benefits from recoupment from other LAs.

- Members asked how the Sensory & Language Impairment Team can underspend as schools are not getting the required provision. LF advised that these figures do not reflect the actual situation. Finance are currently looking into this.

RESOLVED: LF to provide comparison report between 2016/17 and 2017/18 figures for next Schools Forum (see resolution 6 (i) below requiring these for 21st November working group).

6. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA 2018/19

DM referred to report A3 circulated with the agenda. The first part of the report sets out the national position. The government has made certain decisions having reflected on responses to the recent consultation. As a result, rather than having cuts across the board in LBHF schools, there will now be a minimum increase of 0.5%, however, DM emphasised that other spending pressures would impact on this increase.

DM thanked LBHF schools, teachers, parents and pupils who contributed around 10% of the total responses to the government consultation on school funding, which was extremely impressive for such a small London borough.

DM advised that although the Government has confirmed an additional £1.3b for schools and high needs, only £100m is going into the HNB, which is set against deficits across the country. He also advised that in obtaining this funding, the DfE has managed to retain control of the funding, which has been allocated into the schools' grant to benefit education. There will be no separate funding for local authorities to provide support for schools. In the meantime, funding to local authorities has been cut. Academies have also seen their ESG cut.

DM referred to the four blocks of funding:

- Early Years
- Schools
- High Needs
- Central Services

The government has closed down the ability of LAs/Schools Forum to recommend changes between these blocks, although Schools Forum can agree to transfer up to 0.5% from the schools block to another block. Transfer above this rate would be subject to a disapplication request to the Secretary of State.

DM referred to the local formula that has operated in LBHF, which has always reflected the collegiate working where decisions are made collectively between the LA and schools. However, the way this operates will change under the NFF, which will remove the ability for local decisions on schools' finance. The Schools Forum needs to consider the best way to move towards implementing the NFF in two years' time.

DM referred to other issues affecting the management of schools:

- Forced academisation is no longer on the government's agenda but there is still pressure for schools to become academies.
- The role of the LA is diminishing and the only areas the LA is likely to have control over are pupil placement, management of the HNB and admissions.
- If there is a General Election, this could bring more changes.
- Schools may need to buy in services as cuts to central services occur.

DM discussed the possibility of funds being transferred from one block to another to provide support for schools from the central block or to increase the HNB.

Referring to Appendix 1 in report A3, SR asked for clarification on the primary and secondary funding. DM explained that Schools Forum has historically put relatively more money into primary than secondary schools compared with other LAs. DM also referred to the lump sum, which is the same for primary and secondary. Previously Schools Forum set this at £100k, unlike other authorities who set a lump sum of up to £175k. DM believes the government will eventually reduce the lump sum down and therefore recommends this remain at £100k. This is another issue for Schools Forum to consider.

It was agreed that a workshop should be arranged, open to all members of Schools Forum, to consider the funding formula for the next two years, ahead of the implementation of the NFF. Recommended models will then be brought back to the next Forum for a decision to be made. It would be helpful if the workshop could understand the characteristics of those schools most affected by the NFF. DM advised that there is a significant difference across LAs due to local funding formulas, eg, in Westminster 50% of schools will benefit and 50% will not. LBHF will see all schools affected in the same way, which is a reflection of the fairness of the local formula.

Other discussion included:

- The effect the increase in rates will have on LA funding and therefore on schools, eg, although schools will get a 0.5% increase per pupil, the increase in rates may negate this. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the LA continues to use the actual rateable value.
- TS referred to page 5 and asked why the figure is lower following the ACA adjustment. DM will check the accuracy of the ACA figures.
- DM referred to the EFSA website, which provides information on funding. TS advised that the EFSA encourages schools to look at COLLECT for information.
- PH feels that schools should see a 0.5% increase in their funding if this has been stated as happening. DM advised that the only way to do this is by increasing AWPJ.
- A spreadsheet with all schools' information should be provided at the workshop plus a breakdown of what is included in the new formula. TS also suggested the meeting look at the information on COLLECT.
- RO advised that the AWPJ figures in the schedule on page 5 are based on last year's figures. COLLECT is also based on previous census data. This is not a problem if the assumption is that schools' situations are the same this year.

- DM raised the issue of falling rolls and highlighted those schools on page 4. Most of these schools have contact DM, who will be working with them, including looking into why their rolls have dropped. Once the LA understand why rolls are dropping and whether this is likely to continue, a strategic decision can be taken. In the meantime, these schools will require support. LAs are only required to put support in place if the schools with falling rolls are good or outstanding. The LA is not able to apply the LA Support Fund for RI schools but would have to ask for disapplication to enable an RI schools to be supported. PH pointed out that the LA should also look at the percentage of reductions in individual schools, rather than the pupil numbers, as a reduction of say seven pupils in a small school would have a high impact on its funding but would not be included in the list of schools on page 4.
- Not all schools are included in the schedule on page 6 as the LA does not have access to academy data until it is published. The LA has asked academies for this information but not all provided it.
- MB suggested that the LA look at demographic areas to see if there is a trend. DM confirmed that they are analysing the leavers and starters data provided to the LA to see if this gives an informed picture of mobility.
- DA suggested the LA also look at other boroughs and also take a long term view on mobility. DM confirmed that this is being done and stressed the importance of the LA working with schools. LBHF is one of the highest developing boroughs in London and it is important that the LA understand how that affects the number of families moving in/out.
- DM advised that when developing the School Organisation Strategy for this year, the LA will be considering all of these issues.

RESOLVED:

- Workshop to consider formula for 2018/19 and 2019/20 to meet on Tuesday, 21st November at 2pm, to which all members of Schools Forum will be invited. LF to provide financial information for the meeting, including last year's figures. A briefing on the purpose of the workshop to be circulated with the date of the meeting.**
- DM to check accuracy of the ACA figures.**

7. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING REVIEW – UPDATE AND ACTION PLAN

DM gave the following verbal update:

- The government's HNB funding started at 50% of an individual LA's high needs block spend last year, then looked at characteristics of the LA. LBHF is one of the lowest funded boroughs in London and has therefore suffered under the government's 50% starting point. It is being penalised for the money it has invested in its special schools. The LA will be challenging this decision with the EFSA but DM is not confident it will change.
- £500k additional funding will be provided in the base funding but LBHF is entitled to import allowance of £1.6m. DM will be doing more work on this.

- The overspend in the HNB is a mixture of an increase in numbers of SEND, an increase in complexity of SEND and where funding is spent. The LA has little control over the first two, but can influence where funding is spent.
- PH asked how Schools Forum can help challenge this funding decision. DM advised that, unlike the schools' block, there has been no reaction to the HNB funding but it may be beneficial if schools could take this up. The LA will be engaging Peter Gray to do further work on improving how the HNB is spent.
- PH suggested a meeting hosted by Queensmill as an effective way of showing how LBHF supports its SEN students. It was agreed that DM/Peter Gray would suggest who should attend this meeting. FA confirmed that he is happy for the meeting to be held at Queensmill.

RESOLVED: Meeting to be held at Queensmill School – DM/Peter Gray to email PH with suggested names of who should attend. PH to email DM if heard nothing by next Tuesday, 7th November.

8. COMMISSIONING OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

DM explained that all children on roll at TBAP are not included in the census and therefore the LA does not receive funding for them. The White Paper states that mainstream schools should be more involved in the development of these children whilst in an alternative provision and that the mainstream schools should keep them on role. This would ensure funding to the LA. It is recognised that this would mean that these students' results will be included in the mainstream school's overall performance, which could have a destabilising effect.

TBAP is an outstanding provision. The LA will be working with commissioning, schools and TBAP to ensure effective support is in place going forward. It is important that any support commissioned does not compromise the outcomes of those children attending TBAP. Therefore, the LA will work with schools to ensure the correct, cost effective provision is in place.

NCL advised that they still do not know if the White Paper will be taken forward as it requires a statutory change but they do know that current commissioned arrangements have an impact on the schools' block. Considering the provision now will put the LA in a good place if the recommendations in the White Paper are made statutory.

DM asked that a working group be established with representatives from primary, secondary and TBAP to work on this and ensure that support is in place.

RESOLVED: DM to look at establishing a Working Group with schools and TBAP to look at commissioning of AP.

9. EARLY YEARS 2018/19

DM provided the following verbal update. He confirmed that he had updated Jane Gleasure, the EY PVI representative, as she was unable to attend this meeting.

- LBHF had committed to protect full-time nursery places in advance of the introduction of the 30 hours.
- A rate had been set for PVIs and maintained settings.
- Expectation was that those families eligible for 30 hours would register. However not all families are registering, which means the LA is not getting the anticipated funding. DM asked that eligible parents be encouraged to register. MB confirmed that they have been making every effort to do this but one issue is that parents get the money even if they do not register. GF advised that there had been an issue with registration when it was launched ahead of the autumn term.
- Parents need to register by 29th December to ensure funding in January and are required to register every term. MB will liaise with schools with nursery classes and information to be circulated in School Zone.
- Once the LA knows the impact of the 30 hours on income, it can decide on a way forward to ensure support for full-time nursery education.
- MB suggested that primary schools with nursery classes attend the all-party meetings she is part of as it includes politicians and has had an impact. MB to invite DM to next meeting.
- DM to look into how many parents with children in PVIs have registered.
- 331 have registered in the borough but may not use the codes in LBHF settings.
- Practice in LBHF has been to allocate nursery funding based on single census but this is not the way the LA receives funding, which is on a termly basis. MB explained that using the October census would not work for nursery schools as children are slowly integrated into school life but could move to actuals from January and May census. There needs to be some modelling before a decision is made, using historic census information for the examples.

RESOLVED:

- i) Nursery schools and schools with nursery classes to encourage parents to register for 30 hours – reminder to be circulated on School Zone.**
- ii) MB to invite DM to all-party meeting.**
- iii) DM to look into how many parents with children in PVIs have registered for 30 hours.**
- iv) DM to model impact of aligning nursery funding for a decision by Schools Forum.**

SR left the meeting at 3.40pm

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- PH referred to the reduced attendance today, which may have been due to the late notice of the meeting.

- DM provided the following update on the move of LBHF away from the tri-borough:
 - WCC and RBKC are coming towards the end of the staff consultation on the bi-borough structure.
 - LBHF is due to start its consultation with staff next week, which will run for four weeks.
 - LBHF is seeking to re-establish a sovereign education department.
 - There are very few LBHF employees left in the tri-borough.
 - Restructure will be in place for 1st April 2018.
 - Staff in tri-borough services are covered by employment law when considering options for positions in LBHF and bi-borough.
 - Once the consultation is completed, any vacant positions will be recruited to. The new structure will then be fully implemented.
 - LBHF is working closely with the bi-borough to ensure services are not affected.
 - Mandy Lawson has been appointed as LBHF Assistant Director of SEND and Jan Parnell will be the interim lead on school partnerships.
 - LBHF is keen to develop a model of school improvement based on peer to peer support (school to school plus) utilising the expertise in LBHF schools, rather than bringing in additional support.
 - DM will be sending out a letter inviting headteachers to a workshop at Lilla Huset to discuss this further. The meeting will also consider the previous work done around MATs. Although there is no longer a requirement to move towards academisation, this is the direction the government is moving. The meeting will evaluate schools' thoughts and requirements around this. It could also be expanded to existing academies/trusts. Should forced academisation come in, a vehicle would then be in place. DM stressed that this is only at the consideration stage and will only be taken forward if there is an appetite in schools.
- PH raised the current vacancies on Schools Forum. DM/PH to discuss

RESOLVED: DM/PH to discuss current vacancies on Schools Forum

11. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 7th December at 2pm.