

Minutes of the Schools Forum

North London Business Park 28 March 2019

Attended	Name	Representing	Type of Member
Members:	Alexander Banks	Wessex Gardens	Primary Community Headteacher
	Gilbert Knight	Oakleigh	Special School Governor
	Ian Kingham	Oak Lodge	Special Academy Representative
	Siobhan O'Connell	Middx University Nursery	Substitute for Sarah Vipond
	Keith Nason	National Education	Stakeholder- Trade Union
	Lucy Harrison	The Archer Academy	Secondary Free Headteacher
	Luke Bridges	All Saints N20	Primary VA Headteacher
	Marc Lewis	Wren Academy	Substitute for Gavin Smith
	Anthony Vourou	St. Johns N11	Primary VA Governor
	Sarah Sands	Garden Suburb Infants	Primary Community Headteacher
	Simon Horne	Friern Barnet	Community Secondary Headteacher
	Ziz Chater	Dollis Infants	Primary Community Headteacher
	Lucy Rodgers	Colindale	Primary Community Headteacher
	Jack Newton	Underhill	Primary Community Headteacher
	Jo Kelly		PRU
	Dr Matthew Stevens	Saracens High School	Secondary Free School Headteacher
Councillors:	Cllr David Longstaff	Chair of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee	
LA Officers:	Ian Harrison	Education and Skills Director	
	Gaspere Nicolini	Senior Finance Business Partner	
	Claire Gray	School Funding Manager	
	Neil Hooper	CIPFA Trainee - Clerk	
Did not attend:	Robin Archibald	Broadfields Academy	Primary Academy Headteacher
	Jo Djora	The Hyde	Primary Academy Headteacher
	Annette Long	Moss Hall Nursery School	Maintained Nursery Headteacher
	John Bowra	Christ's College Finchley	Secondary Academy Governor
	Curtis Sweetingham	St. Johns N20	Primary VA Headteacher
	Jude Stone	Cromer Road	Primary Community Headteacher
	Sarah Vipond	Middx University Nursery	PVI Nursery providers
	Nigel Taylor	Childs Hill	Primary Community Governor

1. Welcome to new members

There were no new members for this meeting. Ayalah Hirst is no longer a trustee of IJDS academy, and has therefore resigned her position on the Schools Forum. The quorum for this meeting is 10 as a result.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Vipond (Siobhan O'Connell attended as substitute), John Bowra, Robin Archibald, Jude Stone, Annette Long (Caron Rudge attended as substitute) and Jo Djora.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record of the last meeting.

5. Matters arising

None.

6. Items for information

a. 2018/19 Budget Monitoring/ Provisional outturn

GN presented the latest 2018/19 outturn position, highlighting the pressures that exist in the HN block. This continues to be the block that has ongoing pressures moving forward.

IK acknowledged the HN block pressures, but advised that schools are likely to have budget deficit issues. HN bands/ top up funding have been flat cash for some time and are not covering increased staffing costs. Special schools will continue to come under further pressure moving forward as a result of higher staff: pupil ratios.

HP: The current ARP consultation is part of a wider piece of work in terms of reprioritising and reprofiling the resources available, and moving towards a graduated model of provision in Barnet. In general, those with the lowest needs are expected to be in maintained schools, whilst those with more complex and severe needs are likely to be in specialist provision. Further analysis is being undertaken so that, in the future, those with the most severe/complex needs are supported appropriately. Future budget models, including a 3-year projection, will be brought to the Schools Forum for discussion.

LR commented that she felt pupils currently in her ARP were in the appropriate provision; HP advised that she had recently visited all the ARPs and it was clear that some pupils had more severe/ complex needs and these needs might be better met by other specialist provision.

GK commented that parental choice would need to be considered. HP agreed, but suggested that work needs to be carried out with parents to ensure children get the best outcomes from accessing the most appropriate provision. She also said that it was important for different types of provision to work together to ensure the best outcomes for each child, and to have a shared understanding of inclusion

Recommendation:

Schools Forum were asked to note and agree the provisional outturn provision for 2018-19 as shown in the report

Agreed, unanimously.

b. 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant - S251 Budget lines and benchmarking data

The table on p15 shows the 2019/20 DSG draft budget by s251 line; p17 shows the per pupil benchmarking data and compares Barnet with our London statistical neighbours. The data shows that Barnet's expenditure is within the normal range for similar LAs, rather than being an 'outlier' (much higher or much lower than most other similar LAs).

MS asked why neighbouring boroughs such as Enfield, Harrow or Brent are not shown for comparison; GN advised that, according to the DfE local authority data, the boroughs shown most closely resemble Barnet in population size, deprivation levels etc.

Members asked what 'Direct Payments' cover. These are personal transport budgets where parents have chosen to arrange their own transport rather than use SEN transport brokered by the council, where their child is eligible for travel support.

The contribution to 'SEN transport' (1.4.11) is a historic commitment and has remained fixed for a number of years.

KN commented that Barnet has the lowest TU facilities costs compared to statistical neighbours. SH asked why some comparator authorities spent widely different amounts on top-up in line 1.2.1. GN advised that this depends on the number and mix of academies, special schools and non-maintained schools where SEN placements are made. Lines 1.2.1 to 1.2.3 should be looked at as a combined total, as this covers all top-up expenditure.

MS questioned why the Schools Improvement figure was higher than other authorities. IH advised that this was as a result of the increased de-delegation (Learning Network Inspector service) approved by Schools Forum previously.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note s251 budget allocations and benchmarking data.

Noted, unanimous.

c. 2019/20 HN commissioning arrangements and commissioned places

CG presented the first section of this report showing commissioned place numbers – the Forum needs to agree the numbers shown. An additional £0.964m will again be received in the 2019/20 HN block, the same additional amount that was received 18/19. This increases the gross HN block, but the DfE recoups funding for HN places funded directly in academies, FE colleges etc.

Place funding for ARPs in maintained schools and maintained special schools do not need to be submitted to the DfE, these are just agreed locally. Only place numbers at academy ARPs and academy special schools are subject through the annual HN place review process administered by the DfE.

Appendix 1 includes new provision at Whitefield and Chalgrove. The place numbers at London Academy ARP have been revised down which means recoupment from the HN block will reduce

as a result. Top-up bands remain the same at present, but a consultation on ARP top-up funding has just been published.

HP highlighted the increasing demand for special school places, and the increase in place numbers at existing special schools. She indicated that council would be looking to increase capacity in existing special schools whilst waiting for the Windmill Special Academy to open in two or three years' time.

Post 16 top-ups usually show significant movement in the summer term. The council is considering how to increase the number of young people with SEND moving into supported internships and apprenticeships.

HP also reported a slow increase in the costs of independent and non-maintained placements and said increasing local specialist provision should reduce this going forward. The current consultation is part of the process to rebalance provision to reduce pressures

LR advised that she has 11 ARP pupils, not 9 as shown on the commissioned place table. HP advised that the 2 over number would be dealt with at a 'spot purchase' rate.

IK commented on the recent proposal that schools buying into Capita payroll will have 85% transferred into the salaries account, above the level the DfE suggests, and this shows the trend in increasing salary costs in schools. CG advised that the 85% retained figure has been based on analysis of historic staff salary expenditure data.

IK asked if the special school and ARP top-up cost per school (Items 1 and 2, Appendix 1) could be provided for comparison purposes. HP agreed to provide these figures at the next meeting. GK asked if the HN consultation would reach families potentially affected by ARP proposals in future. IH confirmed that legal advice has been taken on consultation with stakeholders and the consultation has been published accordingly.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is asked to note the commissioned high needs places as shown in the report for the 2019/20 school year.

Noted and agreed, unanimous.

Members are asked to note the proposal to consult on changes to ARP top-up rates.

Consultation proposals noted and agreed unanimously.

7. AOB

The agenda for the next meeting will include the following:

- i. Scheme for Financing Schools – update/ consultation
- ii. Schools Capital Programme
- iii. High Needs Block 3-year spending projections

IH advised that Item ii will include a report on consultation on the options for expanding specialist provision and for allocating Special Provision capital, as set out in a report to the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee in March.

8. Dates of future meetings

4pm. Tuesday, 7th May 2019 (TBC)
4pm. Thursday, 11th July 2019

TBC - October 2019
TBC - December 2019
TBC - January 2020

Venues for all meetings to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 5pm.