

## Minutes of the Schools Forum

### Virtual Meeting

8<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Attended	Name	Representing	Type of Member	
<b>Members:</b>	Alexander Banks	Wessex Gardens	Primary Maintained - Headteacher	
	Anthony Vourou	St John's CE N11	Primary Maintained - Governor	
	John Bowra	Christ's College Finchley	Secondary Academy - Governor	
	Ian Kingham	Oak Lodge Special Academy	Deputy Head	
	Robin Archibald	Broadfields	Primary Academy - Headteacher	
	Keith Nason	National Education Union	Trade Union	
	Marc Lewis	Wren Academy	Substitute for Gavin Smith	
	Gilbert K	Special School Governor	Special Schools	
	Matthew Stevens	Saracens High School	Secondary Academy - Headteacher	
	Sarah Sands	Garden Suburb Infant	Primary Maintained - Headteacher	
	Chaya Posen	Shalom Noam Primary	Primary Maintained	
	Simon Horne	Friern Barnet	Secondary Maintained - Headteacher	
	Harvey Freeman	Hasmonean Primary School	Primary School - Governor	
	Ziz Chater	Martin Primary	Primary Maintained - Headteacher	
	Sarah Vipond	PVIs	Early Years	
	<b>Councillors:</b>	David Longstaff	Chair of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee	
	<b>LA Officers:</b>	Ian Harrison	Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, BELS	
Helen Phelan		Director of SEND and Inclusion		
Jonathan Castle		Head of Finance, Children & Family Services		
Gareth Evans		Finance Manager (Schools)		
Claudette James		Assistant Finance Manager (Schools)		
Monae Kirwan		Finance Trainee		
Jude Stone				
<b>Did not attend</b>	(Apologies Received)	Cromer Road Primary School	Primary Community Headteacher	

Chaired by Simon Horne, as Gilbert Knight was unable to join until part of the way through the meeting.

#### 1 Welcome to new members

Chaya Posen was welcomed to the Schools Forum.

#### 2 Apologies

Apologies were received by Jude Stone and Matt Stevens.

#### 3 Declaration of Interest

None directly affecting the decisions of this meeting.

#### 4 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> January and 25<sup>th</sup> February were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meetings.

## **5 Matters Arising**

None.

## **AGEND ITEMS**

### **6 Membership Update**

Gareth Evans presented a table detailing the current Schools Forum membership and proposals for the type of representatives for each category. The number of vacancies was noted and the continued agreed arrangements for dealing with vacancies was presented.

Ian Kingham enquired whether retired staff of a school can continue to be members of the Forum. Ian Harrison said he thought members of the Forum need to be current Head Teachers or Governors or Trustees of Academies.

Mark Lewis suggested that this was not the case for substitutes who could continue to represent a member of the Forum. Keith Nason asked if a substitute can be someone that is not a Head Teacher.

Gareth Evans said he will clarify the points raised at the next meeting.

#### **Recommendation**

That Members note the current membership and continuing agreed arrangements for dealing with vacancies.

The current membership and agreed arrangements for dealing with vacancies were noted.

### **7 2020/21 DSG Final Outturn**

Jonathan Castle presented the report informing the Schools Forum of the end of year position for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and provided an update of the end of year reserves and provisions position for 2020/21.

Simon Horne asked for clarification on the future school growth needs. Ian Harrison explained that the funding received lags behind the expenditure requirement, but that the growth fund will be required for the continued expansion of secondary schools as well as a new primary school.

#### **Recommendation:**

That the Schools Forum note the 2020/21 DSG outturn and the reserve balance carried forwards to 2021/22.

Noted.

### **8 Early Years Funding Update**

Jonathan Castle presented an update, which included proposals for distributing approximately £324,00 of carried forward early years underspend to providers of the 3 and 4 year-old places.

It was also reported that the DfE has still not announced new arrangements for the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools, but Ministers have reiterated a commitment to this. Officers are therefore working with the Barnet maintained nursery schools on plans to minimise the extent of any deficits pending a government announcement.

Sarah Vipond asked whether there would be an increase to the 2 year old rate. Ian Harrison confirmed that the rate had increased in line with income received. There were not any proposals to change it.

**Recommendation:**

That School Forum agrees that that the amount of underspend will be distributed to all EY providers (PVI's and schools) based on the number of 3 and 4 year old hours provided and paid out in the August payment run.

The recommendation was agreed.

**9 2021/22 DSG and Section 251 submission**

Jonathan Castle presented a table detailing the first draft of the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for 2021/22 broken down by block.

The LA must submit its DSG budget to the DfE in section 251 format, which Jonathan Castle also presented.

Ian Kingham asked how the teachers pension and pay grants were being funded to special schools.

Gareth Evans confirmed that the April to August allocation will be paid to special schools now and the September to March allocation would be paid in September.

**Recommendation:**

That Schools Forum is asked to note the 2021/22 DSG budget.

The recommendation was noted.

**10 Schools – 2020-21 Balances**

Jonathan Castle reported on the balances and deficits held by maintained schools at the end of the 2020-21 financial year. School income and expenditure was summarised and a breakdown of school balances detailing surpluses and deficits was also presented.

Jonathan Castle confirmed that the LA is working with all of the schools who have deficits to agree recovery plans.

Sarah Sands asked:

1. if there were any plans to cap school reserves of schools with excessive balances in the future.
2. Were there plans to support schools with a sudden drop in funding due to a drop in pupil numbers.

Jonathan Castle confirmed that he would report back at the next meeting.

Ziz Chater expressed concern that whilst teachers' salaries continue to rise it is extremely difficult for schools to have a balance to spend on supplies and curriculum expenditure.

Keith Nason enquired why there was not a recovery plan for schools with large balances to reduce them. Schools need to educate children now and not spend in the future. He asked the LA to consider writing to schools with surpluses over 5%.

Jonathan Castle to report back in September.

### **Recommendation:**

That Schools Forum note the balances of individual schools and of maintained schools overall.

This was duly noted.

## **11 High Needs Commissioned Places**

Helen Phelan presented Schools Forum with a report updating commissioned places in specialist provision for children and young people with SEND for 2021/22. This included provision in Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs) and Special schools.

Simon Horne asked for clarification on the following:

1. Oak Lodge School - from how many places were increasing to 205
2. Whitefield School – when will the places be filled.

Helen Phelan confirmed that Oak Lodge increasing from 200 to 205 places and places will be filled in September at Whitefield School.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Schools Forum is asked to note the commissioned high needs places for the 2021/22 school year.

This was duly noted.

## **12 Future meetings format**

Members and officers expressed a wish to continue the Schools Forum as virtual in Microsoft Teams

### **Any Other Business**

Gareth Evans mentioned that Quarter 1 returns were due from schools and that a timetable of deadlines for the year was emailed to Heads and school business managers.

Simon Horne thanked the officers for co-ordinating the meetings for the year.

The meeting finished at 4.45pm.

Next Schools Forum meeting in October 2021.