

Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday, 29 September 2014

Shaw House Church Road Newbury RG14 2DR

Present:

Patricia Brims	Governor Brimpton School	Primary Schools
Jeanette Clifford	Governor St Bartholomew's School	Academies
Paul Dick	Headteacher Kennet School	Academies
Brendan Hanlon	Deputy Headteacher, Trinity School	Academies
Mary Harwood	C of E Diocese of Oxford Representative	Church of England Diocese
Peter Hudson	Governor Mortimer St Johns Infant School	Primary Schools
Brian Jenkins	Proprietor Jubilee Day Nursery	PVI
Carolynn Loosen	Schools Funding Officer	Schools Funding Officer
Sheilagh Peacock	Winchcombe School Business Manager	Primary Schools
Ian Pearson	Deputy Corporate Director (Communities) & Head of Education Service	Head of Education
Chris Prickett	Headteacher Streatley Primary School	Primary Schools
Chris Prosser	Headteacher	Secondary Schools
Clive Rothwell	Governor John O'Gaunt School	Secondary Schools
Jane Seymour	Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team	Education Officer
Graham Spellman	RC Diocese of Portsmouth Representative	Roman Catholic Diocese
John Tyzack	Governor Falkland Primary School	Primary Schools
Keith Watts	NUT	Union Representative
Claire White	Finance Manager (Schools)	Schools' Finance Manager
Stacey Williams	Headteacher Reintegration Service	Pupil Referral Units

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:

Councillor David Allen	Council Member, Shadow Portfolio - Children & Young People, Education, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure	Shadow Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Nathan Butler-Broad	Headteacher Spurcroft School	Primary Schools
Fadia Clarke	Deputy Principal Newbury College	Further Education
Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Finance Manager (Children & Young People)	Finance Manager - C&YP
Jon Hewitt	Headteacher The Castle School	Special Schools
Kate House	Headteacher The Ilsleys	Primary Schools
Catherine Morley	Headteacher Theale Primary School	Primary Schools
Councillor Irene Neill	Executive Portfolio - Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education, Safeguarding	Executive Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Derek Peuple	Headteacher Park House School	Academies
David Ramsden	Headteacher Little Heath School	Secondary Schools
Suzanne Taylor	Headteacher Hungerford Nursery School	Nursery Schools
Charlotte Wilson	Headteacher Trinity School	Academies

1. Minutes of previous meeting dated 14th July 2014

The minutes of the meeting on 14th July were approved.

Action

2. Actions arising from previous meetings

All the action points that were due for completion from the last meeting

Action

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have been completed or are on this meeting's agenda. The report on the funding of therapy services is due for presentation at the Forum meeting on 8th December.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Keith Watts who is the NUT representative and represents the Trade Unions on the Schools Forum declared an interest in Trade Union Facilities de-delegation.

Action

4. **Membership**

Eileen Selsey has retired from her role as a Governor at Park House School and therefore as stated in the Forum's terms of reference Eileen's post on the Schools' Forum also comes to an end.

Action

ACTION: Academy schools to elect a new Governor Representative.

**Academy
Reps**

Sarah Brinkley has resigned from her post on the Schools' Forum. Chris Prosser the Headteacher at The Downs School replaces Sarah on the Forum as a Maintained Secondary School Headteacher Representative. Sarah has agreed to be a substitute representative and attend if Chris is unable.

5. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

John Tyzack and Peter Hudson were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Vice Chair by the Schools' Forum members for one year.

Action

6. **School Formula 2015/16**

Claire White presented the report on the schools formula 2015/16. The West Berkshire school formula 2015/16 consultation with schools closed on 11th September. There were 2 responses. The Ilsleys commented on their disappointment regarding the non use of the sparsity factor criteria where despite lobbying the DfE there have been no changes to the two mile distance criteria in the regulations that benefit West Berkshire's very small schools. The Willink submitted a case for funding exceptional premises costs for the leisure centre.

Action

In order to provide schools with stability in their funding for a third year it was recommended that the formula factors remain the same as 2014/15.

The funding cap placed on schools with a per pupil increase was introduced in 2013/14 and was supposed to last two years the same duration as the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) that it was part funding. Many schools receiving the cap did not budget for it past the two years. Although the MFG will now continue it is recommended that the funding cap is removed. Some members did not understand the

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change of policy on the cap but did not disagree with its removal.

The funding rates for each formula factor are to remain the same, including the rates used for deprivation and prior attainment, and therefore more eligible pupils will result in more funding.

Once the schools block funding allocation 2015/16 is known any additional funding available will be distributed through the basic per pupil rate.

The Willink has a leisure centre on site which is run by Parkwood Leisure but the school has use of the sports hall during school hours and use of the swimming pool several times a week and the leisure centre has use of the school gym after 5pm on weekdays and at weekends and during school holidays. No charges are made to the leisure centre for the use of the gym but the school is charged £55k for its use of the facilities and its share of the utilities bill. The Willink meets the criteria for the exceptional premises factor on this basis, which if approved by the EFA will enable the school to receive support if the exceptional premises costs are in excess of 1% of the schools' budget. The situation would be reviewed every year to see if the school's costs were still in excess of 1% of their budget and affect less than 5% of schools.

The three options considered by the Heads Funding Group were:

Fund 100% of costs

Fund 50% of costs

Fund costs in excess of the 1% of school budget.

The HFG view was that funding 50% of the costs supported the school but did not remove the incentive to control costs where possible and that this reflected that most schools incur costs for the use of leisure facilities in some form. There was a heated discussion over the level of funding that The Willink should receive while it meets the exceptional premises criteria. There were questions regarding Parkwood not being charged for use of school facilities, negotiation of the contract with Parkwood Leisure and payment of energy costs.

The preferred options of funded 100% or 50% were put to a vote:

100% 6 votes

50% 5 votes

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed by a majority vote that the exceptional premises factor would be funded at 100% and a submission be made to the EFA.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed to recommend to the Council Executive the formula 2015/16 as set out in the report for approval.

ACTION: Submission to be made to the EFA

C White

ACTION: Recommendations to be reported to the Council's Executive.

C White & I Neill

7. **De-delegations 2015/16**

Ian Pearson presented the report on the de-delegations for the maintained schools 2015/16.

No responses were received on the subject of de-delegation following the consultation with the schools.

Action

Behaviour Support

Includes support for class teachers for individual pupils or groups and training.

Primary Schools: Pool

Secondary Schools: Pool

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Behaviour Support de-delegations.

Ethnic Minority Support

Includes assessment, advice and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those pupils with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage.

Primary Schools: Pool

Secondary Schools: Pool

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Ethnic Minority Support de-delegations.

ACTION: The Schools' Forum requested an update on the recruitment of a Portuguese support officer.

I Pearson

Trade Union Local Representation

This pays for the release of staff as TU representatives, including provision of advice to individual staff members.

Ian Pearson handed out copies of a letter he had received from the ATL, NAHT, NASUWT and NUT urging support for the continued de-delegation of funding.

Primary Schools: No decision

Secondary Schools: No decision

Area of contention is whether representatives are funded at actual costs

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or supply costs.

The Forum has been unable to make a decision on the Trade Unions de-delegation because they feel agreement is required between the Trade Unions and HR on a way forward. The trade unions have not produced a concise and properly costed proposal and the schools are unwilling to agree to de-delegation unless they know the costs involved and the value for money of the service provided.

DECISION: Trade Union de-delegation will return to the next meeting for final consideration after the Heads Funding Group has reviewed properly costed options.

ACTION: Report to be taken to the HFG.

S Coleman-Slaughter & I Pearson

Contingency for Schools in Financial Difficulty

The provision of financial support to schools over and above their formula funding.

Primary Schools: Pool
Secondary Schools: Not Pool

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Ethnic Minority Support de-delegations.

8. Additional Funding Criteria 2015/16

Claire White presented the report on the additional funding criteria 2015/16.

Action

Growth Fund

In 2013/14 £100k was set aside for the Growth Fund, but actual expenditure was £200k. In 2014/15 £250k has been top sliced from the DSG for the Growth Fund.

The 2015/16 funding requirement will only be known once the October census data is available and so it is proposed to keep the fund at £250k. The 2015/16 budget can be adjusted in the January 2015 submission to the EFA if required.

The only proposed change to the growth fund criteria is an element that supports diseconomies of scale when a new school opens but is not full. If a new school is less than 90% full then a lump sum of £1000 per percentage point below 100% capacity is made, up to a maximum of £80,000 (i.e. 20% full) and payable for the first two years only.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Growth Fund 2015/16 criteria change.

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Falling Rolls Fund

The use of the falling rolls fund is restricted to schools classed as good or outstanding by Ofsted so it cannot be used to support unpopular or failing schools. It is unlikely to be used in the current year as rolls are generally rising except in schools with a poor Ofsted.

The Heads Funding Group discussed whether to leave the budget 2015/16 at £120k, reduce the budget or remove the funding. The Heads Funding Group recommended that the fund be reduced to £40k.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Falling Rolls Fund 2015/16 criteria to remain the same and the reduction of the fund to £40k.

Funding for Primary Schools in Financial Difficulty

It is proposed that the criteria remain the same for 2015/16 but with the addition of specified benchmarking data to be included in the application.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the change to the criteria to include specified benchmarking data.

Additional SEN Funding

Four options for 2015/16 were discussed:

Method A

The current method where the number of high needs pupils receiving top ups is greater than 2% in primary schools and 4% in secondary schools.

Method B

As the current method but funding to be proportionate rather than based on rounded down pupil numbers.

Method C

Using the actual average percentage of high needs pupils in the local authority per primary and secondary sector plus 1%.

Method D

Funding the difference between the actual notional SEN the school has received and the actual number of SEN pupils receiving top ups x £6000.

The Heads Funding Group recommended method C which gives the most amount of funding and reflects the actual numbers of high needs pupils in each sector within West Berkshire.

Concerns have been voiced by some small schools regarding insufficient notional SEN formula when all the pupils with additional education needs below the £6k threshold are added to those high needs

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pupils at the school receiving top ups. Unfortunately nothing can be done through the formula to address this problem as all schools are funded on the same basis; making efficient use of the funding available is essential.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed to option C for 2015/16 which is regarded as the fairest way of targeting funding and produces the highest level of additional funding.

9. High Needs Places and Arrangements 2015/16

Jane Seymour presented the report on the high needs places and arrangements 2015/16 for information.

Action

In 2014/15 there are 666 funded places in special schools, primary and secondary school resource units, mainstream post 16, alternative provision and further education of which 640 places are currently filled.

The EFA will base 2015/16 on 2014/15 and any extra places must be applied for as an exception and are unlikely to be agreed if:

- The total number of additional places is less than 5% of the 2014/15 place allocation (33 places).
- If an institution that has more than 50 places the increase is less than 10%.
- If an institution of less than 50 places the increase are less than 5 additional places.

The deadline for exception requests to reach the EFA is 17th October 2014.

Additional places will be required for the new Secondary ASD Resource due to open in September 2015 and for the West Berkshire Training Consortium. The Primary ASD Resource is now likely to open in September 2016. It is likely that the additional places will not meet the 10% criteria and no additional funding will be received in which case place numbers across the settings will need to be reviewed.

10. DSG Monitoring 2014/15 - Month 5

Ian Pearson presented the DSG 2014/15 monitoring report as at 31st August 2014 for information. The forecast position as at the end of August is an under spend of £633k most of which is concentrated in the High Needs Block. The SEN funding adjustments for the primary and secondary pupil September admissions are not reflected in the month 5 report.

Action

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11. **Forward Plan September to December 2014**

The Heads Funding Group and Schools' Forum Autumn term reports plan including scope of the report, author and the relevant submission deadline was presented for information.

Action

Meeting closed at 6.35 pm

Date of next meeting: Monday 8th December 2014
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Shaw House