

# Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Shaw House

<b>Present:</b>	Richard Blofeld	Headteacher	Robert Sandilands Primary School
	Nick Breach	Governor	Shaw cum Donnington Primary School
	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson	Headteacher	Victoria Park Nursery School
	Jeanette Clifford	Governor	St Bartholomews School
	Kathryn Cockar	Headteacher	Kennet Valley Primary School
	Jacquie Davies (substitute)	Headteacher	Alternative Curriculum (PRU)
	Paul Dick	Headmaster	Kennet School
	Peter Fry	Headteacher	The Willink School
	Revd Mary Harwood	Church of England Representative	Oxford Diocese
	Jane Headland	Headteacher	Brookfields Special School
	Barbara Hunter	Headteacher	Francis Baily School
	Brian Jenkins	Early Years PVI Representative	Jubilee Day Nursery
	Chris Prickett	Headteacher	Streatley Primary School
	Clive Rothwell	Governor	John O'Gaunt School
	Pam Slingsby	School Business Manager	Basildon Primary School
	Graham Spellman	Roman Catholic Representative	Portsmouth Diocese
	Maria Tillett	School Business Manager	Theale Green School
	John Tyzack (Chair)	Chair of Governors	Whitelands Park Primary School
	Glyn Whiteford	Headteacher	Denefield School
	Irene Neill	Portfolio Holder for C&YP	
	Ian Pearson	Head of Education	
	Carolynn Loosen (Minutes)	Schools' Funding Officer	
	Claire White	Schools' Finance Manager	

## Action

### 1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Margaret Goldie	Director	Communities
John Micklewhite (Vice Chair)	Headteacher	Birch Copse Primary School
David Ramsden	Headteacher	Little Heath School
Jo Stewart	Parent Representative	Kennet Valley Primary School
Stacey Williams	Headteacher	Reintegration Service
Charlotte Wilson	Headteacher	Trinity School

### ABSENT

Alan Macro Shadow Portfolio Holder C&YP

### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS DATED 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012 AND 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> October were approved.

### 3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Reports on the Mental Health Services and the Behavioural Services Action Plan to be presented at the next Schools' Forum meeting.

**C Burnham**

An update of The Willows' five year plan with outturn 2011/12 and the effect of the September 2012 pupil numbers to be presented at the next Schools' Forum meeting.

C Warren

An update on dialogue between Adrian Slaughter and the academies on the Carbon Reduction Commitment is outstanding.

A Slaughter

Following the restructure of the Forum to maintain proportional representation Clive Rothwell remains a substantive member of the Forum representing the maintained secondary schools and Ken Somner moves to the post of substitute for the maintained secondary schools.

Nicola Walters of Acres of Fun Nursery has been appointed as the substitute for the Private Voluntary and Independent sector.

#### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Maria Tillett declared an interest in item 5 relating to Theale Green's bid as she is the school's School Business Manager.

Reverend Mary Harwood declared an interest for item 6 on the agenda as she is also the Chair of Governors at the Chaddleworth and Shefford Federation.

#### 5. FINAL DSG ALLOCATION 2012/13 AND USE OF BALANCE

Claire White presented a report on the final 2012/13 DSG allocation, which following the adjustments for the academies, final carry forward of 2011/12 centrally retained school budgets and final pupil numbers is £93.943m. This has resulted in an additional £655,000 of DSG to allocate.

The Heads Funding Group considered the allocation of the additional DSG which included revisiting the list of bids for funding from the last round of allocations which could not be progressed due to insufficient funds. The HFG has made the following recommendations:

##### Specialist Inclusion Support Service (Special Schools)

Demand for the Inclusion Support Service provided by The Castle School and Brookfields School staff to the other schools has increased significantly over the years. However the increase in demand means that special schools are subsidising the service and so they have requested a total of £45,000 in additional funding to sustain the service at the current level or the service will have to be scaled back.

**DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed £20,000 of funding for The Castle School and £25,000 of funding for Brookfields School.**

**ACTION: Funding to be allocated to the special schools in October.**

C Loosen

### Specialist Family Support Worker ASD Resource

The bid for the Specialist Support Worker at the ASD Resource Unit of £32,260 involves recruiting a post and as the funding being considered is not on-going the HFG recommended that the funding be carried forward to 2013/14 and support of the bid be subject to on-going funding being available from the High Needs Block.

**DECISION: Schools Forum agreed that £32,260 should be carried forward to 2013/14 and the bid reviewed once the 2013/14 High Needs Block funding is confirmed.**

### ASD Advisory Service 1FTE

The bid for the ASD Advisory Service of £31,270 also involves recruiting a post and so the HFG recommended that the funding be carried forward to 2013/14 and support of the bid be subject to on-going funding being available from the High Needs Block.

**DECISION: Schools Forum agreed that £31,270 should be carried forward to 2013/14 and the bid reviewed once the 2013/14 High Needs Block funding is confirmed.**

### John O'Gaunt School

The Schools Forum had committed to financially support John O'Gaunt School on an annual basis, however the funding formula reform changes and the number of secondary schools that have converted to academy status means that this is no longer possible. Therefore in order to reduce the impact of loss of the financial support the Heads Funding Group recommended that £200,000 of the additional funding should be put aside to support John O'Gaunt subject to the new Headteacher, School Business Manager and Governing Body presenting a robust and radical recovery plan to the Schools' Forum in the Spring Term.

**DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed that £200,000 should be set aside to support John O'Gaunt School once they have fulfilled the recovery plan requirement.**

### Theale Green Bid

Theale Green requested £50,000 of school contingency to support school improvement. The recommendation from the HFG was that the bid should not be supported as the school is not in financial difficulty and it will receive an allocation of the remaining additional funding to assist financing school improvement.

**DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed that the bid should not be supported.**

### Allocation Method of the Remaining Balance

The HFG recommended that the remaining funding of £346,470 should be allocated across all schools. The secondary school representatives decided they wanted their share of the funding allocated based on pupil numbers. In addition to pupil numbers the primary school representatives wanted a lump sum element included in the primary school allocation method to assist the small schools. Claire

White presented costings for the primary school allocation based on a lump sum of £500 and pupil numbers and also a £1000 lump sum and pupil numbers.

**DECISION: Secondary School allocation to be based on pupil numbers only and Primary School allocation to be based on £1000 lump sum and pupil numbers.**

**ACTION: Funding to be allocated to the schools on the agreed basis during October.**

C Loosen

## **6. CLAWBACK OF EXCESS SURPLUS BALANCES – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL**

John Tyzack reported on the Schools' Forum Excess Surplus Balances Panel meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

Instead of all 17 schools with an excess balance at the end of March 2012, which were all primary schools, facing an automatic clawback the Schools Forum gave the schools an opportunity to explain the balance during interviews with the Schools Forum Excess Balance Panel, a sub group of the Schools' Forum. The panel members are John Tyzack (Chair), Richard Blofeld, Kathy Cocker, Graham Spellman, and Maria Tillett.

The panel based their recommendation on whether the school could provide supporting evidence that they had made firm plans for the use of the forecast surplus balance before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 and that that the surplus balance was now spent. Consideration was also given to schools where the surplus balance was due to exceptional circumstances, or if the school had received income in their main school budget from a third party, but had not spent it by the end of 2011/12.

No clawback was recommended by the panel for eight of the schools, however for the remaining schools claw backs were recommended. The total excess balance for 2011/12 was £257,878 and the proposed clawback is £46,483. There is also an excess balance relating to 2010/11 from Shefford Primary School which had been clawed back but was not reallocated as the school argued it was needed to repair the roof of its federation partner Chaddleworth Primary School. During 2011/12 the LA paid for the roof repairs and the school only had to contribute £7,500, so the excess balance panel decided that the £7,500 would be returned to the Shefford and Chaddleworth Primary School Federation but that £12,515 of their excess balance from 2010/11 would remain clawed back as the condition of its return had been that the money was required for the roof project and that the school did not have an excess balance at the end of 2011/12 which it did. The total value of the clawback is £58,998.

Three of the eight schools where clawbacks were recommended have written letters that were issued to the Schools' Forum members.

The Schools Forum clarified that the decision making had been delegated to the panel, but requested that the panel reconvene to review the letters for any new evidence that might impact on their original decision.

The letters were reviewed by the panel members after the main Schools Forum meeting and it was decided that the letters contained no new evidence that would

cause the panel to overturn their original decision.

**DECISION: That £58,998 should be allocated across all primary schools that did not have an excess balance based on pupil numbers.**

**ACTION: Letters to be sent to all schools with an excess balance confirming the decision of the Forum.**

J Tyzack

**ACTION: Letters to be sent to all schools regarding the claw back of excess surplus balances.**

J Tyzack

**ACTION: Claw back funding to be reallocated to all primary schools except those that had an excess balance.**

C Loosen

## 7. OVERVIEW ON HIGH NEEDS FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FROM 2013/14

Claire White presented an overview of the High Needs Funding Arrangements from 2013/14 for SEN pupils in mainstream schools, resource units, special schools and pupil referral units. Forum members were concerned that the local authority will no longer arrange inter-authority recoupment and that the Local Authority in which the child lives will pay the top up funding direct to the school increasing the administration burden on the school. It was requested that the SEN service provide schools with the contact details LA staff in the other authorities.

The report included the proposed revised bandings and top ups for high needs pupils, which are still required to be expressed in terms of hours on a statement rather than the monetary value. The Headteacher members explained that the problem with hours being on the statement rather than the monetary value of the provision is that there is a conflict between the parent's expectation and the number of hours the funding will provide, which will be dependent on the cost of the staff assigned to the pupil. Ian Pearson explained that the use of hours on SEN statements was an historic problem and it was not possible to change.

Under the funding reforms every mainstream school will receive a notional SEN budget within their funding which is based on a formula, not the number of children identified as having special needs and it is for all pupil's SEN / AEN additional requirements, whether stated or not. Claire White's report identified schools where their notional SEN budget under place plus is less than their current statement commitments and therefore this will need addressing within the High Needs Funding Block.

**ACTION: The SEN Service to review and inform schools on a process for recouping funding from other Local Authorities.**

J Seymour

## 8. UPDATE ON SEN REVIEW ACTION PLANS

Ian Pearson presented a report on the Special Educational Needs action plans for Individual Pupils with SEN and Out of Authority on behalf of Jane Seymour, the SEN Service Manager. The action plans continue to focus on the most efficient use of resources through early intervention, collaboration and improved systems.

The Schools Forum is to continue to receive an annual report from Jane Seymour.

## 9. DSG MONITORING 2012/13, MONTH 5

Claire White and Ian Pearson presented the DSG monitoring report as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. No significant variances were reported.

## 10. SCHOOL FUNDING BENCHMARKING INFORMATION

Carolynn Loosen provided benchmarking information from the Section 251 budget statement workbooks which have recently been published by the DfE, for both West Berkshire's statistical neighbours and other unitary authorities. The benchmarking included both the guaranteed unit of funding that the LA receives and the delegated individual school budgets.

When compared to its statistical neighbours West Berkshire funds schools at or above the average in the primary phase and secondary phases though this is also reflected in the guaranteed unit of funding received. West Berkshire's guaranteed unit of funding is below average when compared to the other unitary authorities, though individual school budgets are well above the average. This may be because our level of delegation to schools is higher.

Meeting closed 6:30 p.m.

Schools Forum Excess Balance Panel meeting took place after the Schools' Forum meeting.

**Date of next meeting:** Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012  
**Time:** 5pm  
**Venue:** Shaw House