

Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday 10th December 2012

Shaw House

Present:	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson		Headteacher	Victoria Park Nursery School
	Jeanette Clifford		Governor	St Bartholomews School
	Kathryn Cockar		Headteacher	Kennet Valley Primary School
	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
	John Micklewhite	(Vice Chair)	Headteacher	Birch Copse Primary School
	Chris Prickett		Headteacher	Streatley Primary School
	Clive Rothwell		Governor	John O'Gaunt 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
	Stacey Williams		Headteacher	Reintegration Service
	Charlotte Wilson		Headteacher	Trinity 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

Richard Blofeld	Headteacher	Robert Sandilands Primary School
Nick Breach	Governor	Shaw cum Donnington Primary School
Margaret Goldie	Director	Communities
David Ramsden	Headteacher	Little Heath School
Pam Slingsby	School Business Manager	Basildon Primary School
Jo Stewart	Parent Representative	Kennet Valley Primary School
Glyn Whiteford	Headteacher	Denefield School

ABSENT

Alan Macro	Shadow Portfolio Holder C&YP
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2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS DATED 15TH OCTOBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting on 15th October were approved.

3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Reports on the Mental Health Services and the Behavioural Services Action Plan

C Burnham /

were considered by the Heads Funding Group but it was decided that additional financial data was also needed.

I Pearson

Once the reports on the Mental Health Services and the Behavioural Services Action Plan have been presented to the HFG they are to be circulated to the Schools Forum members for information.

C Loosen

Adrian Slaughter is awaiting the results of Carbon Reduction Commitment consultation.

A Slaughter

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

5. SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM- CRITERIA FOR GROWTH FUND / CONTINGENCY FUNDING.

Pupil Number Growth

There were further discussions on determining a criterion for both maintained schools and academies to access the contingency held for additional funding for a growth in pupil numbers at the start of the Autumn Term.

The threshold options were:

30 pupils across school or a % across the school

30 pupils across a year group or a % across a year group

It is difficult in secondary schools to ascertain class size and so it was suggested that a percentage be used, however for a small school a small pupil number increase would cause a large percentage increase.

ACTION: Claire White and Paul Dick to liaise on creating feasible models for both primary schools and secondary schools and decide on a proposal to bring back to the next Schools' Forum.

**C White /
P Dick**

Infant Class Size Funding

There is no infant class size funding factor in the formula funding allocation. However infant class size funding is permitted for in-year pupil growth for increases in Reception and KS1 of less than 30 pupils where an additional class is necessary and the school has not planned for that additional class in its budget. Schools need to take into account that the funding is only for two terms and the following year the funding reverts to pupil numbers only. At least 11 additional pupils are required to fund an M3 pay scale teacher.

DECISION: Criteria for Infant Class Size Funding agreed by the Schools Forum

Schools in Financial Difficulty (Maintained Primary Schools Only)

The Schools Forum agreed the criteria subject to the HFG sharpening some of the wording. The areas to be concentrated on are a definition of “poor Ofsted” and making it clear that a school in deficit may be considered to additional funding if they satisfy the criteria and that the deficit is not due to poor financial management.

If schools do not meet the criteria a longer deficit recovery plan may be required. If the £114k put aside for 2013/14 is not sufficient any overspend will go against the following year’s DSG.

The HFG will make the decision on applications for SiFD Funding.

6. RATES FUNDING 2013/14

Claire White presented a report on two possible funding arrangements for school non domestic rates from 2013/14 following the changes implemented in the school funding reforms.

Option 1

Fund the schools on the previous year actual; in year 1 this will also involve adjusting for the in year adjustments. The schools can still budget for the actual rates which they will know before they have to set their budgets. Any significant difference between the funding and the actual e.g. for revaluations can be a provision in the schools’ year end accounts for receiving the income the following year.

Option 2

Fund the schools based on an estimate of their rates for the forthcoming year. Any over estimation or underestimation would be an adjustment to the following year’s funding.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed that the procedure set out in option 1 is to be used to fund schools’ non domestic rates from 2013/14.

7. REVIEW OF DSG FUNDING FOR 2013/14 AND DRAFT BUDGET

Claire White presented a report on the changes to DSG funding in 2013/14. In particular the change from one funding block and one Guaranteed Unit of Funding per pupil into 3 funding blocks (Schools Block, Early Years Block and High Needs Block). The Schools Block and Early Years Block have different GUFs and GUFs do not apply to the High Needs Block. The Early Years GUF will not be known until after the start of the financial year and actual uptake will not be known until the end of the financial year.

The DfE will base the High Needs Block on the actual planned spend 2012/13 with several adjustments including that the LA is only responsible for the top up payments of the pupils that reside in West Berkshire.

The blocks are not ring-fenced so funding can be moved between the blocks and

it may be that if there is not sufficient funding in the High Needs Block that funding may have to be moved from the Schools Block reducing the per pupil funding that the schools receive. The DfE is due to confirm the LA funding allocation in late December and the schools budget is due to be submitted to the EFA by 18th January 2013.

8. UPDATE ON SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Clare Warren presented a report on the 3 schools (Fir Tree, John O'Gaunt and Stockcross) that had budgeted for a deficit in 2012/13 and progress made in supporting them.

Fir Tree had budgeted to end 2012/13 with a £72k deficit but as of month 7 it was looking more like £56k.

Stockcross is now forecasting a breakeven position as their budget included a redundancy which is no longer required.

John O'Gaunt has a new Headteacher and School Business Manager and together with the support of the Schools Finance Advisor, who visits approximately once a week, they are reviewing the staffing structure and financial plan.

Like John O'Gaunt The Willows is currently receiving additional financial support and the school is forecasting a small underspend when the additional funding is included.

When the indicative budgets are available from mid December those schools negatively affected and likely to go into deficit will be offered support.

9. DSG MONITORING 2012/13, MONTH 7

Claire White and Ian Pearson presented the DSG monitoring report as at 31st October 2012. The DSG 2012/13 forecast at the end of October is a £317k underspend, which is mostly due to lower SEN out of authority placements.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

The Chair has received formal notification from Jo Stewart that due to work commitments she is tendering her resignation from the Schools Forum with immediate effect.

ACTION: Primary Governor vacancy to be advertised.

C Loosen

Meeting closed 6:30 p.m.

Date of next meeting: Monday 21st January 2013

Time: 5pm

Venue: Shaw House