
Schools' Forum Membership and Constitution from September 2026/27

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum
Date of Meeting: 13th July 2026
Report Author: Jessica Bailiss
Item for: Decision **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To review and where necessary update the membership and Constitution of the Schools' Forum for 2026/27.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Schools' Forum approve the Constitution for 2026/27, including an update to the attendance provisions to reflect the Forum's current meeting cycle, and minor consequential amendments to reflect the revised membership composition set out in the report.
- 2.2 That the Schools' Forum approve the revised membership composition for 2026/27, as set out in this report, to reflect recent academy conversions and maintain a total membership of 26, with any variance managed in accordance with the approach set out in section 4.11.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?	
Yes: ☒	No: ☐

Implications and Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact:	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Commentary
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			The report aims to review and where necessary update the membership and Constitution of the Schools' Forum. This will help to ensure that pupils are fairly represented at the Schools' Forum. The refreshed Constitution will be published on the Schools' Forum's webpage.

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Data Impact:		x		

3. Executive Summary

Issue Identification

- 3.1 The Schools' Forum is required to review its membership and Constitution regularly to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and that representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers across school sectors. The Constitution was last approved following the governance review in October 2025.
- 3.2 The membership needs to be reviewed to see if the split based on pupil numbers remains appropriate. Since the last review, a number of schools in West Berkshire have converted to academy status. The January 2026 schools census data shows there has been an increase in the number of pupils in the academy sector and indicates that the existing membership composition no longer fully reflects the balance of pupils across sectors in the district (set out in detail under section 4).

Proposals

- 3.3 This report proposes a revised membership composition for the Schools' Forum for 2026/27 to reflect the changes in pupil numbers. The proposal maintains the overall size of the Forum at 26 members as the intended composition and ensures continued compliance with statutory requirements, including the requirement that school and academy members make up at least two-thirds of the total membership.
- 3.4 It is recognised that in implementing the revised membership, the Forum may operate with a small variance from the proposed membership structure. This variance will be managed in accordance with the approach set out in 4.11 of the report. The membership with this small variance is considered to remain broadly proportionate to pupil numbers and therefore compliant with the requirements of the Schools' Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.5 In addition, to better reflect the Forum's current meeting cycle, a minor amendment is proposed to the Constitution's attendance provisions. As there are no Forum meetings scheduled between February and May, the current six-month non-attendance rule (section 2.10 of the Constitution) would be replaced with a meetings-based provision.
- 3.6 The Schools' Forum is invited to approve the revised membership (under Table 3) and Constitution from September 2026, as set out in this report.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.7 The membership and Constitution of the Schools' Forum are reviewed by the Schools' Forum on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with statutory requirements and that representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers.

4. Supporting Information

Schools' Forum Constitution

- 4.1 The current Constitution complies with the Schools' Forums (England) Regulations 2012 and there have been no legislative changes requiring amendment.
- 4.2 A minor amendment to the attendance provisions of the Constitution is considered appropriate to better reflect the Forum's current meeting cycle. As there are no Forum meetings scheduled between February and May, the current six month non-attendance rule (section 2.10 of the Constitution) would be replaced with a meetings based provision, whereby a member may cease to be a member following failure to attend three consecutive meetings (or organise an appropriate substitute), unless a reason for non-attendance has been approved beforehand.
- 4.3 Subject to the Forum's agreement, the Constitution will be updated accordingly and published on the Schools' Forum webpage. Forum members are also invited to suggest any further changes they consider necessary or desirable.

Membership

- 4.4 Due to a shift in pupil numbers, based on the January 2026 data, a change to the Forum's membership composition needs to be considered.
- 4.5 The current rules in respect of the Schools' Forum membership are as follows:
- (1) The need to have full representation for the various types of school with the number of members representing each being broadly proportionate to the number of pupils in each phase. This is to ensure debate within the Schools' Forum is balanced and representative.
 - (2) There is no minimum or maximum number of members, but non-school members must not make up more than one third of the total membership. However, care should be taken to keep the Schools' Forum to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.
- 4.6 Table 1 below details the current breakdown in pupil numbers between the three main groups based on the January 2025 and January 2026 census data. It can be seen that there has been a significant shift in pupil numbers to the academy sector. The shift in numbers is due to the Downs secondary school and John Rankin, Basildon, Compton and Streatley primary schools converting to academies.

TABLE 1	Pupil Numbers (Jan 25 census)		Pupil Numbers (Jan 26 census)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Primary Schools	(61) 11,164	43%	(56) 9921	39%
Secondary Schools	(3) 4350	17%	(2) 2891	11%
Academy Schools	(13) 10,209	40%	12,565 (19)	50%
TOTAL	25,723	100%	25,377	100%

(*The number of schools in each sector is shown in brackets and pupil numbers include nursery and sixth form)

4.7 The membership composition for 2025/26 was as follows:

TABLE 2					
School Members	Heads	Governors	Other	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	%
Primary	4	3	1	8	43%
Secondary	3	0	0	3	17%
Academies	5*	2	0	7	40%
<i>Total</i>	12	5	1	18	100%
Other School Members					
Nursery Schools	1			1	
Special Schools	1			1	
iCollege (PRU)	1			1	
Academy Special Schools	1* (included above)				
<i>Total</i>				3	
Non School Members					
RC Diocese			1	1	
C of E Diocese			1	1	
Early Years PVI			1	1	
Trade Union			1	1	
Non School Post 16			1	1	
<i>Total</i>				5	
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	15	5	6	26	
Proportion of School Members (minimum must be 66.7%)				80.8%	

- 4.8 It was noted as part of the governance review in 2025 and survey with Forum members, that the overall membership number of 26 was about right and should not increase. It was noted however, that this can be reviewed if felt necessary as part of any future annual review. The Department for Education's Operational and Good Practice Guide for Schools' Forums sets out that care should be taken to keep schools' forums to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.
- 4.9 Table 3 below, shows the revised membership composition based on the change in pupil numbers and is based on the overall membership number remaining the same (26).
- 4.10 As part of the governance review, it was agreed that the special academy representative should take the place of the long standing vacancy in the academy group so this arrangement has been continued in the proposed membership composition set out below.

TABLE 3					
School Members	Heads	Governors	Other	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	%
Primary	4	2	1	7	39
Secondary	2	0	0	2	11
Academies	6*	3	0	9	50
<i>Total</i>	12	5	1	18	100%
Other School Members					
Nursery Schools	1			1	
Special Schools	1			1	
iCollege (PRU)	1			1	
Academy Special Schools	1* (included above)				
<i>Total</i>				3	
Non School Members					
RC Diocese			1	1	
C of E Diocese			1	1	
Early Years PVI			1	1	
Trade Union			1	1	
Non School Post 16			1	1	
<i>Total</i>				5	
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	15	5	6	26	
Proportion of School Members (minimum must be 66.7%)				80.8%	

- 4.11 The reduction in primary representation by one place would be managed through a natural vacancy arising over time. As a result, the Forum may exceed the proposed number of representatives within this group for a period of time, which remains consistent with the requirement for broadly proportionate representation. The reduction in secondary representation by one place has already been accommodated through a vacancy arising following the conversion of The Downs School to academy status.
- 4.12 It is proposed that the two additional academy places comprise one headteacher representative and one governor representative, in order to maintain a balanced range of perspectives and reflect the current composition within the academy group.
- 4.13 Subject to the Forum's agreement, the Constitution will be updated to reflect the revised membership composition.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The annual review of Schools' Forum membership has identified that recent academy conversions have altered the distribution of pupils across school sectors in West Berkshire. The proposed revisions to membership reflect this updated pupil profile while maintaining the overall size of the Forum at 26 members and compliance with statutory requirements.
- 5.2 The Schools' Forum is therefore invited to approve the revised membership and Constitution from September 2026.

6. Consultation and Engagement

Chair of the Schools Forum
Service Director – Education and SEND
Democratic Services Manager

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix B: Constitution of the Schools Forum
Appendix C: Membership of the Schools Forum

West Berkshire Council
Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE
March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	West Berkshire Schools' Forum
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	The Schools' Forum's Constitution and Membership for 2026/2027
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	This assessment relates to the annual review of the Schools' Forum's Constitution and membership for 2026/27. Only a positive impact from carrying out this work has been identified. The review helps to ensure that pupils continue to be fairly represented at the Schools' Forum. The refreshed Constitution will be published on the Schools' Forum webpage.
Completed By	Jessica Bailiss
Authorised By	Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)
Date of Assessment	May 2026

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	The Schools' Forum Constitution and Membership are reviewed annually and brought to the Forum each July for consideration. A review of the membership is undertaken to ensure if the split based on pupil numbers is still correct or needs to be changed.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The proposals are set out in section 3 of the report.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	Set out in Section 4 of the report.

Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Forum Members are invited to suggest any changes which they deem necessary or desirable.
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☐	☒	☐				
Disability	☒	☐	☐			.	
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐				
Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐				
Displaced communities	☒	☐	☐				
Care experienced people	☒	☐	☐				
The Armed Forces Community	☒	☐	☐				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	May 2026
Person Responsible for Review	Jessica Bailiss
Authorised By	Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)