

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM
HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2021
VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING
(10:00am to 12:00pm)**

Present: Maintained Primary Representatives

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| Scott Halliwell (SH) (Joint Chair) | HT, Southwood Primary School |
| Julie Philips (JP) | HT, Godwin Primary School |
| Martin Nicholson (MN) | HT, Grafton Primary School |
| Gill Massar (GM) | HT, William Bellamy Primary School |
| Richard November (RN) | HT, Valence Primary School |
| Simon Abeledo (SA) | HT, Rush Green Primary School |
| Junaida Bana (JB) | HT, Furze Infant School |

Maintained Secondary Representatives

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|---------------|--------------------------|
| Tony Roe (TR) | HT, Barking Abbey School |
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Vacant

Maintained All-through (A/T)

Vacant

Governor Representatives (1 pri & 1 sec)

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| David Dickson (DD) | HT, Eastbury Community School |
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Vacant

Academy & Free Primary

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| Lisa Shepherd (LS) | HT, Eastbury Primary School |
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Academy & Free Secondary

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| Andy Roberts | HT, Riverside School |
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Academy & Free Schools (A/T)

Vacant

Academy Special School Representative

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Roger Leighton (RL) (Joint Chair) | Chief Executive, Partnership Learning |
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Maintained Special Schools Representative

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| Susan Ball (SB) | HT, Trinity School |
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Maintained PRU Representative

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| Cathy Stygal (CS) | HT, Mayesbrook Park School |
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Governor Representative

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| David Dickson (DD) | HT, Eastbury Community School |
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Early Years Representative

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| John Trow Smith (JTS) | Early Years, Local Authority |
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Trade Union Representatives

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| Dominic Byrne (DB) | NUT |
| John McGill (JMc) | NASUWT |

Church of England Representative

David Huntingford (DH)

HT, William Ford C of E Junior School

Catholic Representative

Clare Cantle (CC)

HT, All Saints Catholic School

Also present:

Jane Hargreaves (JH), Commissioning Director – Education
 Councillor Evelyn Carpenter (CC) – Cabinet Member for Education and Schools
 Patricia Harvey (PH) – Senior Professional, High Needs Block
 Katherine Heffernan (KH) – Group Manager, Local Authority Finance and Investment
 Shaj Sivadasan (SS) – Principal Accountant, Schools - Local Authority Finance
 Kofi Adu (KA) – Group Accountant – Local Authority Finance
 Caroline Connolly (CC) – Finance Business Partner
 Simon Abeledo (SA) – HT, Rush Green Primary School
 Mairead Pryor (MP) –
 Janet Cassford (JC) – HT, Aspire Virtual School
 Holly Pottle
 Grant Krog
 Gurmit Kaur
 Davina Nwaizu
 Liz Bailey
 Jamie Bell
 Charlotte Mortimer
 Nichola Young (NY) – Local Authority Minute Clerk

Mr Scott Halliwell chaired the meeting, Mr Roger Leighton to chair the January 2022 meeting.

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|------------|--|------------------------|----------------|--|--------------|
| 1.0 | <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> | | | | |
| | Apologies were received from Ronan Fox and Cathy Stygal. | | | | |
| 2.0 | <u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u> | | | | |
| | No declarations of interest were recorded. | | | | |
| 3.0 | <u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</u> | | | | |
| | 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record. | | | | |
| | 3.2 Update on actions from <u>previous</u> meetings. | | | | |
| | No. | Date of Meeting | Item No | Action | Owner |
| | 1 | 19/10/2021 | 3.1 | National Funding Formula A note about the National Funding Formula to be added into the spring edition of the Director’s report to governors. Ongoing – this will occur in the Spring term. | KH/KA |
| | 2 | 19/10/2021 | 5.4 & 5.5 | Falling Rolls issues Andy Carr to attend a business meeting and speak with HTs about the impact on schools of reducing numbers at Reception and Lower Secondary with particular regard to where new sites have opened. | KH/KA |

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| | | | Complete – AC has attended the director’s meeting and is following up at the primary HTs meeting. | |
| 3 | 19/10/2021 | 8.5 | Payments Query RN & KA to have a conversation about payments received by Valence outside of this meeting. Complete | KA/RN |
| 4 | 19/10/2021 | 8.12 | Visits to Reception Classes PH to speak with the SEN team about the feasibility of Jacqui Twitchell visiting all Reception classes. Complete – AJo, JB, PH & Jacqui Twitchell have met, and some visits have occurred. | PH |

4.0 REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT – FINANCE

1. 2021/22 DSG Grant Update

- 1.1 There are no changes to the DSG allocations reported at the October forum.
- 1.2 The final position on the Early Years clawback has been confirmed, more money is being held in the DSG for distribution. There is a proposal to use this for Early Years and High Needs additional payments for this financial year.
- 1.3 The forecasted High Needs spend has increased.
- 1.4 The projected outturn in the DSG reserves is just under £6m.

Recommendation (i): Schools’ Forum are requested to:

- (a) Note the 2021-22 DSG grant funding allocations

Noted

2. DSG Projected Out-turn

See appendix 1

| | 2021/22 Funding £'000s | 2021/22 Projected Out-turn+ £'000s | + Surplus / (Deficit) March 21 £'000s | EY adjust. |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Schools Block – ISB | 183,342 | 183,019 | 323 | |
| Central Block | 2,360 | 2,360 | 0 | |
| High Needs Block | 38,566 | 40,718 | (2,451) | |
| Early Years Block | 23,205 | 23,205 | 0 | |
| Total | 247,473 | 249,302 | (2,128) | (2,128) |
| DSG reserves b/f (surplus) | | | | 9,828 |
| Total - Unadjusted DSG Reserves | | | | 7,700 |
| Less Early Years clawback | | | | (563) |
| Growth Fund balance b/f | | | | (641) |
| SFFD retained centrally | | | | (699) |
| Projected 2021/22 Closing DSG Reserves | | | | 5,797 |

Recommendation (ii): Schools’ Forum are requested to note the:

- a. Projected DSG outturn position for 2020/21
b. Revised DSG outturn

Noted

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| | <p>3. High Needs Update</p> <p>3.1 A questionnaire concerning funding for Reception and Early Years children that started in September was sent to schools following an action from the last Forum. Jacqui Twitchell, Joy Barter, Ann Jones and Pat Harvey met to look at the data and confirmed there are 13 band H children, with checks still underway.</p> <p>3.2 Funding for schools in support of bands F, G and H children is expected to be £4k per child.</p> <p>3.3 DSG reserves are approximately 2%. The spending review has been announced with an expected 8 to 11% maximum increase on the HNB next year. Subsequent years could see a reduction where reserves may need to be drawn on.</p> <p>3.4 The MFG for schools is 2%.</p> <p>3.5 HTs welcomed capital improvements and are grateful for the additional funding. Schools were urged to contact Steve Benning for any capital works or improvement concerns.</p> <p>3.6 Headteachers reported that further training and support for SEND/Inclusion Teams within schools is vital. A concern was expressed around the viability of funding in the future.</p> <p>3.7 The LA will continue to commission BDSIP from April 2022 to provide training for school staff on aspects of SEND/Inclusion. HTs will be asked to contribute to the commissioning specifications to ensure that the correct training is provided, either through the HN Working Group or another vehicle.</p> <p>3.8 HTs were advised that further collaborative work is being undertaken on a roadmap for SEN children and that headline work will commence in the Spring term.</p> <p>3.9 PH reported on considerations and modelling to support internal provisions, especially for those schools which do not have ARPs. Consideration is being given to how we might earmark funding to support schools that have set up internal provisions for children with high needs. The difference between ARPS and internal provisions need to be distinguished in census returns. ARPs are referred to as resourced spaces whilst internal provisions are referred to as internal units.</p> <p>3.10 HTs asked that the wellbeing of staff caring for these high needs children and the challenges faced be considered.</p> <p>3.11 MN informed colleagues that positive feedback has been received from HTs about how the LA have responded to concerns raised this year.</p> <p>3.12 For transparency, there are 19 Band G children, not 13 as listed in the report.</p> <p>3.13 Schools have reported confusion around reception, Early Years and PVI settings and have requested clarification around pro-rata payments. PH explained that this is due to some of the children attending part time.</p> <p>3.14 Appendix 1 shows additional payments made to schools. Early Years payments have not yet been paid to schools.</p> <p>3.15 The viability of ongoing funding for these high needs children is a concern to schools.</p> | <p>Action</p> <p>NC/</p> <p>MM</p> |
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3.16 HTs asked whether the Inclusion Team could work with HTs on sharing expertise and training. The LA holds a budget to commission training for SEND/Inclusion. We need to agree with Heads priorities for this. Heads were also advised to look at the BDSIP traded offer and if necessary discuss any bespoke requirements for their staff. LA staff are working also to increase the resource for specialist health staff such as SALT, CAMHS, specialist nursing, OH. This is in partnership with Health colleagues and is responding to the gaps which schools are reporting. We are planning that once appointed these colleagues will also provide training for school staff. A further update will be provided at the January 2022 meeting.

3.17 HTs were advised that the HNB are working with Health on joint commissioning two S&L posts.

Recommendation (iii): Schools' Forum is requested to:

- (a) Note and comment on the 2021/22 High Needs Outturn Forecast.
- (b) Note the High Needs working group discussions from the meeting held on 25 November 2021.
- (c) Note and comment about the additional one-off payment to support reception and PVI pupils with SEN

Noted

4. Early Years Update and Clawback

4.1 A provision was made for Early Years as the government were expected to clawback last year's full underspend of £2,367. The actual clawback was £563k, which leaves £1.804m to be put back into reserves.

4.2 A provision of £1.1m has been made to support Early Years and reception children starting in September that were considered to be Bands F, G or H. The remaining £600k will be added to the DSG reserves.

4.4 JTS and Joy Barter to have a discussion around the possibility of offering additional hours to children who were delayed in entering nurseries or PVI settings. JTS to prepare a proposal to take to JB on what difference the funding could make.

Action JTS

4.5 The DfE Early Years funding rates will be increased in April 2022. B&D are proposing to increase the rates paid to providers in excess of the DfE uplift due to pressures faced by the sector. The proposed increase of 25p for 3 and 4 year olds is made up of 17p from the DfE plus an additional 8p recommended by the LA. The 2 year old funding is made up of 21p from the DfE plus an additional 4p as recommended by the LA. Not all of this increase is passed on to providers, some is held centrally by the LA. The total rate for 3 and 4 year olds is £5.09 and £5.76 for 2 year olds. There will be a small manageable overspend in 2022-23 putting these increases into effect.

4.6 A total amount of £500k has been set aside for an SEN Inclusion Fund which will be passported on to settings. £122k for 3 and 4 year olds and £378k for 2 year olds. It is a statutory requirement for the LA to set aside 5% of the total fund amount for 3 and 4 year olds to be centrally retained to support the services below.

| 3 and 4 YO central Costs | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Childminding development Officers | 73,546 | 70,742 |
| Early Years Teachers Service | 554,134 | 533,008 |
| Home Portage Scheme | 190,155 | 182,906 |
| Targeted Support Central Costs DSG | 115,211 | 110,819 |
| Total | 933,047 | 897,475 |

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| | <p>4.7 New HTs requested additional information on the what the services are and whether they are accessible to schools.</p> <p>4.8 JB to update on the query raised by new HT reps around EY centrally funded services and what the money is used for.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p> <p>JB</p> <p>Recommendation (iv): Schools' Forum are requested to:</p> <p>(a) Note the 2020/21 Early Years Clawback adjustment (b) Note and comment on the Early Years funded hourly rates for 2022/23. (c) Approve the SEN Inclusion fund (refer to section 4.8 in the report) (d) Approve the Early Years Centrally funded services line by line (refer to section 4.9 in the report).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Noted and approved subject to further information from JB for new colleagues.</p> | |
| | <p>5. <u>Funding of School Improvement Functions</u></p> <p>5.1 The DfE have undertaken a funding reform, one form of this is how school improvement functions are funded. The LA receive a specific grant from the DfE which supports statutory school improvement services. They are proposing that this be removed with retained school improvement functions supported by de-delegation from maintained schools. If the proposal goes ahead then the LA will be seeking de-delegation for half of the grant in January 2022. The grant received is £167,600, the proposal will be to delegate £83,800k which is an approximate per pupil cost of £2.81. In April 2023 the full grant could be removed where the full amount may have to be delegated at £5.62 per pupil.</p> <p>5.2 There have been many objections to the proposal from councils and teacher unions. This is a further pressure on school budgets. We await the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p>5.3 De-delegation for school improvement duties would not apply to academy trusts, but they are able to buy in.</p> <p>5.4 A piece of work on setting out school improvement functions has commenced, and Schools' Forum will receive a further update at the January meeting.</p> <p>5.5 The local funding formula will be brought for approval following the DfE consultation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p> <p>KA</p> <p>Recommendation (v): Schools' Forum are requested to note and comment on:</p> <p>(a) Proposal to remove the School Improvement grant (b) Proposed de-delegation for school improvement function.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p> | |
| 5.0 | <p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>None reported.</p> | |
| 6.0 | <p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>Tuesday 18 January 2022, virtual Teams meeting from 10:00am to 12:00pm. RL to chair the January meeting.</p> <p>Head teachers' pre-meeting will be arranged by NY and will commence at <u>9.15am.</u></p> | |
| 7.0 | <p><u>ACTION LOG</u></p> | |

| Date of meeting | Item No | Action | Owner |
|------------------------|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 7 December 2021 | Item 3.7 | <u>High Needs Update</u> HTs will be asked to contribute to the BDSIP commissioning specifications to ensure that correct training is provided to SEND/Inclusion teams within schools. | Mike McKeaveney / Natasha Cock |
| 7 December 2021 | Item 4.4 | <u>Early Years Proposal</u> An JTS and Joy Barter to have a discussion around the possibility of offering additional hours to children who were delayed in entering nurseries or PVI settings. JTS to prepare a proposal to take to JB on what difference the funding could make. | John Trow Smith |
| 7 December 2021 | Item 4.8 | <u>EY Centrally Funded Services</u> JB to update on the query raised by new HT reps around EY centrally funded services and what the money is used for. | Joy Barter |
| 7 December 2021 | Item 5.5 | <u>Local Authority School Improvement Functions</u> Key piece of work on how the School Improvement Grant is used will be provided for the January meeting. | Kofi Adu |