

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM
HELD ON 22 JUNE 2021
VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING
(10:00am to 12:00pm)**

Present:

Maintained Primary Representatives

Paramjit Roopra (PR)	HT, Northbury Primary School
Scott Halliwell (SH) (Joint Chair)	HT, Southwood Primary School
Christine James (CJ)	HT, Dorothy Barley Infants School
Jayne Meech (JM)	HT, Village Infant 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

Maintained Secondary Representatives

Ges Smith (GS)	HT, Jo Richardson Community School
Tony Roe (TR)	HT, Barking Abbey School

Maintained All-through (A/T)

Governor Representatives (1 pri & 1 sec)

David Dickson (DD)	HT, Eastbury Community School
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Academy & Free Primary

Lisa Shepherd	HT, Eastbury Primary School
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Academy & Free Secondary

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

Janis Davies	HT, Sydney Russell School
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Academy Special School Representative

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

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

Annie Blackmore (AB)	HT, Mayesbrook Park School
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Governor Representative

David Dickson	HT, Eastbury Community School
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Early Years Representative

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

Dominic Byrne (DB)	NUT
John McGill	NASUWT

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
 Graham Bland (GB) – HT, Community Music Service
 Digby Hunt (DH) – DHT, Community Music Service
 Nichola Young (NY) – Local Authority Minute Clerk

Mr Scott Halliwell chaired the meeting, Mr Roger Leighton to chair the October 2021 meeting.

1.0	<p><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Ronan Fox, Clare Cattle and Andy Roberts.</p>				
2.0	<p><u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest were recorded.</p>				
3.0	<p><u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.</p> <p>3.2 Update on actions from <u>previous</u> meetings.</p>				
	No.	Date of Meeting	Item No	Action	Owner
1	20/10/2020	Item 3.5	<p><u>HNB</u> PH to discuss the number of children in mainstream who should be accessing special needs at the next HNB Sub-Group and report back to the January 2021 Schools’ Forum – Ongoing</p>	Pat Harvey	
2	20/10/2020	Item 9.3	<p><u>BACS Migration</u> A request was made for a paper on the BACS migration process to be provided to schools - Ongoing</p>	Kofi Adu	
3	19/01/2021	Item 1.4	<p><u>Governor representatives</u> KH/KA to contact Governor Services to check they cover academies and free schools to ensure the SF election process is fair. – Yet to receive confirmation – if a vacancy does arise (check chat)</p>	Kofi Adu/ Katherine Heffernan	
4.0	<p><u>REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT – FINANCE</u></p> <p>1. <u>DSG Outturn for 2020/21</u></p>				

	2020/21 Funding £'000s	2020/21 Projected Out-turn £'000s	(Surplus) / +Deficit March 21 £'000s
Schools Block – ISB	171,254	171,414	160
Central Block	2,364	2,364	0
High Needs Block	34,015	32,379	(1,636)
Early Years Block	22,933	20,566	(2,367)
Total	230,566	226,723	(3,843)
DSG reserves b/f			(3,542)
Growth Fund balance b/f			(641)
SFFD retained centrally			(699)
DSG release of contingencies			(1,103)
DSG out-turn			(9,828)
Early Years adjustment			2,367
Adjusted DSG exc Early Years			(7,461)

- 1.1 There is a planned overspend on Schools' block with an underspend on HNB and Early Years. It is likely that the Early Years underspend will need to be repaid.
- 1.2 The DSG outturn for 2020-21 is £9,828. The adjusted DSG outturn, after the Early Years adjustment is £7,461m.
- 1.3 HTs questioned whether it may be prudent to use some of the surplus to help SEN children and those with complex needs, catch up.
- 1.4 MN informed Schools' Forum that schools are at crisis point now due to the sheer number of children with complex needs and that the number of children coming into primary schools with EHC plans in September is unmanageable.
- 1.5 PH informed SF colleagues that as a HNB action she is looking at the census of two schools (Valence and George Carey) in comparison to January 2020. These schools have an exceptionally high number of children with complex needs. PH is also looking at notional budgets and comparing the actual and projected spend of an all through school.
- 1.6 PH urged caution about using the reserves as we are aware of more children coming through the system. Need to be strategic with the spend.
- 1.7 JTS questioned whether the Early Years underspend will be passported to providers if the DfE does not claw back the money. KH will provide an update after the DfE intention is known.
- 1.8 KA urged caution due to this being an unusual year and suggested that Schools' Forum use allocated budgets for this financial year rather than touching the reserves. If any additional pressures arise then we can look at using reserves to mitigate and deal with these pressures.
- 1.9 JH is supporting MN's point where individual schools with exceptional pressures need to be supported based on the evidence.
- 1.10 HT colleagues requested that Band G allocations for mainstream and special schools be made equal. Jacqui Twitchell is undertaking a banding audit which will be reported back to the HNB. This audit ties in with the placing of children in new ARPs.

	<p>1.12 A further HNB working party to take place in July to address the issues raised at today's meeting. Schools can feed issues to SH, RL and MN to be raised</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p> <p>Recommendation (i): Schools' Forum are requested to:</p> <p>(a) To note the DSG out-turn for 202-21 (b) To note the revised DSG reserves position</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	NY/ PH																																																
	<p>2. <u>Local Management of Schools (LMS) Outturn / Reserves</u></p> <p>2.1 See appendix 1</p> <p>Recommendation (ii): Schools' Forum are requested to:</p> <p>a. note and comment on the updated LMS reserves 2020/21.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>																																																	
	<p>3. <u>2021/22 DSG Update</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="251 867 1349 1134"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2021/22 as at Dec. 2020 Update (a)</th> <th>Less: Recoup't (b)</th> <th>Net 2021/22 DSG (c) = (a) - (b)</th> <th>2021/22 as at March 2021 Updated (v)</th> <th>Less: Recoup't (w)</th> <th>Net 2021/22 DSG as (x) = (v) - (w)</th> <th>Move't Net DSG (y)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Schools Bloc</td> <td>244,281</td> <td>60,939</td> <td>183,342</td> <td>244,281</td> <td>60,939</td> <td>183,342</td> <td>(0)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Central Block</td> <td>2,360</td> <td></td> <td>2,360</td> <td>2,360</td> <td></td> <td>2,360</td> <td>(0)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Needs</td> <td>42,598</td> <td>3,620</td> <td>38,978</td> <td>42,598</td> <td>4,001</td> <td>38,597</td> <td>(381)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early Years</td> <td>23,205</td> <td></td> <td>23,205</td> <td>23,205</td> <td></td> <td>23,205</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total:</td> <td>312,444</td> <td>64,559</td> <td>247,885</td> <td>312,444</td> <td>64,940</td> <td>247,504</td> <td>(381)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3.1 For noting.</p> <p>Recommendation (iii): Schools' Forum is requested to note:</p> <p>(a) Updated 2021/22 DSG funding position</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>		2021/22 as at Dec. 2020 Update (a)	Less: Recoup't (b)	Net 2021/22 DSG (c) = (a) - (b)	2021/22 as at March 2021 Updated (v)	Less: Recoup't (w)	Net 2021/22 DSG as (x) = (v) - (w)	Move't Net DSG (y)	Schools Bloc	244,281	60,939	183,342	244,281	60,939	183,342	(0)	Central Block	2,360		2,360	2,360		2,360	(0)	High Needs	42,598	3,620	38,978	42,598	4,001	38,597	(381)	Early Years	23,205		23,205	23,205		23,205	0	Total:	312,444	64,559	247,885	312,444	64,940	247,504	(381)	
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	<p>4. <u>High Needs Block (HNB) Outturn for 2020/21</u></p>																																																	

	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 March Outturn	2020/21 Jan Outturn Forecast	Variance +deficit / (surplus)
Alternative Provision	3,544,000	3,574,000	3,399,759	3,188,669	(174,241)
ARP Funding	6,032,800	6,102,000	6,093,890	6,042,652	(8,110)
DSG – HN Education Inclusion.	1,666,000	1,618,000	1,494,256	1,586,483	(123,744)
Top-ups (inc. OB & NMSS)	6,662,200	7,635,000	6,264,504	6,908,293	(1,370,496)
High Needs Top Ups – Post 16	969,000	1,291,000	1,801,210	1,753,542	510,210
SEN Panel Top Ups	1,418,000	1,148,000	1,522,596	1,148,000	374,596
LACHES, Language Support	331,000	335,000	360,490	361,482	25,490
Initiatives	200,000	150,000	147,608	150,000	(2,392)
Special School Funding	7,493,000	10,643,000	10,951,784	10,954,092	308,784
Early Years & Integrated Youth	398,000	356,000	342,143	342,163	(13,857)
Total	28,714,000	32,852,000	32,378,240	32,435,376	(473,760)
Surplus & Gatekeeping / Cont		1,162,675	1,636,435	1,579,299	(1,162,675)
Total Budget		34,014,675	34,014,675	34,014,675	(1,636,435)

4.1 Most underspend is due to the contingency that was set aside for in year growth which was not used.

4.2 There is a deferred need in top-ups.

4.3 The table above is not an indication of the levels of need for next year.

Recommendation (iv): Schools' Forum are requested to:

Note and comment on the 2020/21 High Needs Outturn forecast position.

Noted

5. HN Budget for 2021/22

5.1 There is a proposal for a Speech & Language post to work in partnership with health colleagues to provide additional support. This was initially for ARPS but there is an indication of need for early identification of need in primary schools. There is an available S&L therapist within health.

5.2 Even with the underspend, there are emerging pressures. There is a £500k overspend in Post 16, top-up panel, LACHES and special school funding all have an overspend also. There is always an overspend on special schools due to lagged funding.

5.3 Appendix 2 indicated the funding increases for pressure areas and provides comparisons on previous budgets. ARP funding and special school funding both increased. Some aspects of the top-up budget has increased and ARPS and Top up payments have been increased to 6%.

5.4 SH questioned whether the HNB is enough and whether needs can be met considering the numbers of HN children coming in is this borough. KA updated colleagues that the contingency set aside has been reduced to consider the additional pressures.

5.5 The Capital team are looking into ARP expansions. KH informed SF colleagues that Barking and Dagenham are very good as a borough at managing this budget.

5.6 JTS - At the HNB Working Group an increase to Early Years ARP style provision, which could be attached to a mainstream school or a PVI, was discussed. PH will bring a report back in the Autumn term.

5.7 RL informed colleagues that the new special school, Oxlow bridge is in the planning stages and should open in September 2023, providing 100 places.

Colleagues were advised to direct all further issues to the HNB meeting in July.

Recommendation (v): Schools' Forum are requested to:

Note and comment on the updated High Needs budget for 2021/22

Noted

6. Updated Early Years (EY) funding and payments for 2020/21

6.1 Early Years are reporting an underspend of £2,367m which is subject to DfE clawback. Take up was low during the pandemic; this is a very difficult time for the EY sector.

Recommendation (vi): Schools' Forum are requested to note:

(a) Note the updated 2020/21 Early Years funding arrangements.

Noted

7. Falling Rolls for 2021/22

See Appendix 4

7.1 There is an expectation that the Falling Rolls issue will improve, with a better position known in September.

7.2 Falling rolls support can only be given to good or outstanding schools, this a mandatory requirement of the DfE. See below.

School	Oct 19 NOR	Oct 2020 NOR	Primary NOR Reductions	Adjust..for bulge class / planned reductions	Actual drop in NOR adjusted for Bulge Class	% Change in ISB	LMS as % of ISB	AWPU (£3,820) at 46%
Dorothy Barley Jun.	402	387	(15)		(15)	(1.4)	^	26,901
Northbury	809	780	(29)		(29)	(1.9)	5	52,009
Ripple Primary	898	867	(31)		(31)	(1.7)	(29)	55,595
Valence Primary	998	940	(58)	29	(29)	(2.8)	0	52,308
John Perry	585	552	(33)		(33)	(2.4)	0	59,182
Gascoigne	1155	1086	(69)		(69)	(4.2)	4	123,745
Thames View Inf.	334	312	(22)		(22)	(5.2)	8	39,455
Parsloes Primary	497	463	(34)		(34)	(4.9)	7	60,976
St Josephs (Dag)	371	358	(13)		(13)	(0.6)	^	24,830
TOTAL			(291)		(262)			495,000

7.3 DDI to meet with KA outside of Schools' Forum about how data is presented in terms of all through schools as numbers at Eastbury Community School (secondary phase) are down by 50.

7.4 RN questioned the reasoning behind only funding 29 rather than 58 which is the full loss of the bulge class at Valence and asked for this to be reconsidered. It was confirmed that it for SF to decide as to whether the full loss will be included on this occasion. SH suggested that this be taken to the FMG for consideration on previous decisions as this may impact other bulge classes for this academic year.

Action

**KA/
KH**

Recommendation (vii): Schools' Forum are requested to consider the approval of:

<p>(a) The revised falling rolls criteria. (b) Falling Rolls fund allocations.</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Approved</p> <p>8. <u>Schools Facing Financial Difficulty Fund (SFFD)</u></p> <p>See Appendix 5.</p> <p>8.1 There are currently no proposed changes. There is money in the fund, currently there does not seem to be a need to increase this fund. The fund will not be released at it is in use. Schools' Forum colleagues agree it is sensible to keep the fund in place but may need to be reviewed in the future.</p> <p>8.2 RL suggested that for transparency a line be added to each planned repayment profiles so that FMG have a sight that schools are keeping up with repayments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p> <p>8.3 Lisa Shepherd asked SF to note that Eastbury Primary School have paid more than what is shown in Appendix 5.</p> <p>Recommendation (viii): Schools' Forum are requested to note and comment on:</p> <p>(a) Total SFFD funds (b) SFFD loans outstanding (c) Balance of SFFD centrally</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	FMG
<p>9. <u>Changes to Pupil Premium census data</u></p> <p>See Appendix 6</p> <p>9.1 Changes to FSM calculations has had an impact on our schools with Pupil Premium funding being based on the October census rather than the January census. Schools to note that this has been factored into financial planning. It is ever more important that pupils are moved into FSM as soon as possible.</p> <p>Recommendation (ix): Schools' Forum are requested to note:</p> <p>(a) The change in policy for allocating Pupil premium by DfE and financial impacts on schools</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	
<p>10. <u>Update on Covid19 Funding for Schools</u></p> <p>10.1 Schools to note deadlines and funding applications with SBM, Kofi's team can support if need be but ultimately it is the schools' responsibility.</p> <p>Recommendation (xii): Schools' Forum are requested to note:</p> <p>(a) the update on Covid-19 funding for schools</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	
<p>11. <u>Music Service Funding Contribution by schools</u></p> <p>11.1 The CMS have moved into a traded relationship with individual schools. Extensive conversations with schools have taken place. More than 75% of schools have confirmed, with further confirmations anticipated. There is ongoing contact with schools yet to confirm.</p>	

	<p>11.2 75% of schools needed to confirm in order for the SLA model to work. Money previously came from central services. This will not be taken from school budgets, there will be individual SLA with schools who will be invoiced by the CMS directly.</p> <p>11.3 A Trewern update will be shared in October.</p> <p>Recommendation (xiii): Schools' Forum are requested to note and comment on the:</p> <p>(a) CMS contributions to be agreed by each school by Service Level Agreement</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	
	<p>12. <u>Financial Regulations for Schools - consultations</u></p> <p>12.1 A working group was created to standardise Financial Regulations for schools and is nearly ready to go out for consultation. This will be brought back to SF in October when comments have been incorporated. The Financial Regulations will also be available on the Barking and Dagenham website.</p> <p>Recommendation (xiv): Schools' Forum are requested:</p> <p>(b) to note and comment on the Financial Regulations for consultation</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	
	<p>13. <u>Other Updates</u></p>	
	<p>14. <u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>14.1 The deadline for the submittal of ratified 3-year budget plans as set out in the scheme for financing schools has passed. Schools that have not done this are encouraged to so ASAP.</p> <p>14.2 Consistent Financial Return data to be uploaded onto the DfE Collect Database. KA updated colleagues a change in the deadline on the on the Collect Upload database. The deadline was 31 July but is now 15 July 2021, this means that CFR returns will have to be uploaded onto the database by the 2 July 2021. This will give Finance two weeks to review, quality assure and approve uploads before the 15 July. The DfE will be naming and shaming LAs that delay this process.</p> <p>14.3 HT colleagues requested that they be copied into urgent correspondence sent to School Business Managers.</p> <p>Recommendation (xv): Schools' Forum are requested to note:</p> <p>(a) The update on the introduction of Schools Financial Regulations</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Noted</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>5.1 The chair thanked the members of Schools' Forum that are stepping down:</p> <p><u>Ges Smith, Chris James and Annie Blackmore are retiring at the end of the summer term, David Dickson is retiring at Christmas. Cathy Stygal will be the Alternative Provision representative from September 2021. Paramjit is stepping down at the end of the summer term to concentrate on other business. The chair expressed thanks to all for their hard work and input.</u></p>	

	The chair thanked Cllr Carpenter for the lobbying and work that she undertook with regards to pupil premium.																			
6.0	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The DfE have changed the Schools' Forum regulations to allow meetings to continue to be virtual. KH questioned whether colleagues would prefer to meet in person, virtually or a hybrid model could be developed. A survey to be prepared and sent to Schools' Forum members to collect preferences.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p> <p>Tuesday 19 October 2021, virtual Teams meeting from 10:00am to 12:00pm. – RL to chair October meeting.</p> <p>Head teachers' pre-meeting will commence at 9.15am.</p>																			
7.0	<p><u>ACTION LOG</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date of meeting</th> <th>Item No</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Owner</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22 June 2021</td> <td>Item 1.4</td> <td><u>Additional HNB Working Sun Group meeting</u> An additional HNB working group meeting to be arranged to address the issues surrounding the high level of children in mainstream settings with complex needs raised at this meeting.</td> <td>Pat Harvey/ Nichola Young</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22 June 2021</td> <td>Item 7.4</td> <td><u>Bulge Class at Valence Primary</u> FMG to consider funding the full loss of the bulge class at Valence Primary School.</td> <td>Kofi Adu/ Katherine Heffernan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22 June 2021</td> <td>Item 6.0</td> <td><u>Meeting preferences</u> A survey to be sent to Schools' Fourm members to collect their meeting preferences around whether meetings should remain virtual or return to in person.</td> <td>Kofi Adu/ Katherine Heffernan</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Date of meeting	Item No	Action	Owner	22 June 2021	Item 1.4	<u>Additional HNB Working Sun Group meeting</u> An additional HNB working group meeting to be arranged to address the issues surrounding the high level of children in mainstream settings with complex needs raised at this meeting.	Pat Harvey/ Nichola Young	22 June 2021	Item 7.4	<u>Bulge Class at Valence Primary</u> FMG to consider funding the full loss of the bulge class at Valence Primary School.	Kofi Adu/ Katherine Heffernan	22 June 2021	Item 6.0	<u>Meeting preferences</u> A survey to be sent to Schools' Fourm members to collect their meeting preferences around whether meetings should remain virtual or return to in person.	Kofi Adu/ Katherine Heffernan	
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