

## Schools Forum

**May 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 - Minutes**

<b>Forum Members Present:</b>	
Diana Turner – Chair	Academy (Governor)
Peter Reaney	Academy (Governor)
Latika Davis	Governor
Larry Granelly	Governor
Phil Clucas	Governor
Philip Johnson	Governor
Cathy Clarke	Primary Headteacher
Stella Saje	Primary Headteacher
Richard Hawkins	Primary Headteacher
Tony Wilmot	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Patsy Weighill	Academy (Headteacher)
Philip Hamilton	Academy (Headteacher)
Judith Humphry	Special School Headteacher
Steve Dyke	PVI Representative
Andy Summers	Teachers Union Representative
Lisa Capper	16-19 Representative
Jane Burrows	Representing David Kelham
Joy Mitchell	Representing Ranjit Samra
<b>Non Members Present:</b>	
Cllr Rickhards	Elected Member
David Hazeldine	County Secretary ASCL
<b>LA Officers:</b>	
Sarah Callaghan	Head of Service – Learning & Achievement
John Betts	Head of Corporate Finance
Simon Smith	Strategic Finance Manager
Sara Haslam	Schools Funding & Strategy Manager
Clare Morris	Budget Planning Officer, Schools Funding Team
Liz Holt	Service Manager – Access and Organisation
Nigel Exell	Commissioning Development Manager
Sheila Dentith	Senior Learning Improvement Officer

<b>Forum Members Apologies:</b>	
Gill Humphriss	Primary Headteacher
Chris Errington	Primary Headteacher
Ranjit Samra	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Andrew Clay	Academy (Headteacher)
Rachel Gillett	Nursery School Headteacher
David Kelham	Academy (Governor)
Chris Smart	Governor
Ramesh Srivastava	Governor
Cllr Tandy	Governor
Cllr Timms	Elected Member
Sybil Hanson	Diocesan Board of Education

The Chair introduced new members of Schools Forum; Richard Hawkins representing the Primary sector and Andy Summers as the Teaching Union Representative. Sara added that Andrew Clay, Academy Head teacher, is also a new member of Schools Forum but was unable to attend the meeting. Sara also introduced Jane Burrows, Finance Director of Myton School who was representing David Kelham and Joy Mitchell, North Leamington School representing Ranjit Samra. Lisa Capper, the 16-19 Representative introduced herself to the Forum.

The Chair passed on the Forums' best wishes to Wendy Fabbro who was unable to attend the meeting due to her recent accident.

## **2.0 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

2.1 It was requested that a correction be made to name spelling of Ramesh Srivastava.

2.2 The following matters were arising:

2.3 Page 4 point 5.2 Disadvantaged 2 year old funding. Sara confirmed that Cabinet had now given approval to the recommended rate of funding for disadvantaged 2 year olds (£4.95/hr for a maximum of 15 hrs/week).

2.4 Page 6/7 point 7 Secondary Alternative Provision Allocation. It was agreed at the previous meeting that in 2013/14 the way in which funding is allocated to ABPs will be based on FSM ever 6 years and 7.8% of ABP funding will be de delegated to pay for the education of pupils with complex and acute needs. The following concerns regarding these decisions were raised on behalf of the central area ABP:

- The paper had not been distributed within the remit of the terms of reference for consultation.
- The paper was noted on the agenda as “for information only” and did not indicate that a decision was required.
- ABPs have proved successful and this change has been made too late and will put ABPs in a difficult position next year.
- No transitional support was discussed and the decision was made without proper consultation and clarification of the impact.
- The revised Terms of Reference details the financial analysis that should be undertaken regarding Schools Forum reports. It was suggested that this matter should be discussed again with further analysis included.

2.5 In addition the following comments were made:

- Primary heads had not discussed the issue at their pre meeting as the paper had been marked as “for information only” on the agenda. The paper also did not make clear the impact of the decision.
- The Northern area discussed the paper after the meeting as they did not have the opportunity to consider the paper before the meeting and therefore support the view to revisit this issue.
- The knock on effect of the changes to the funding need to be clear

2.6 Sarah Callaghan pointed out that there was a meeting of ABPs on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May and it may be appropriate to initially revisit the decision at that meeting.

2.7 Simon pointed out that to bring the issue back to Schools Forum at the next meeting in October would be half way through the financial year and there is already a significant agenda in October. Therefore it was suggested that an earlier special meeting of Forum be organised.

**2.8 *Agreed: The issue would be discussed at the ABP meeting 17<sup>th</sup> May. A special Schools Forum has been arranged on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June to revisit the ABP decision (along with other reports)***

2.9 It was requested that the new report gives a proper understanding of the overall effect of this decision.

### **3.0 New Schools Forum Membership and Revised Terms of Reference.**

3.1 Sara presented a paper and Schools Forum were asked to agree the revised Terms of Reference provided as Appendix B.

3.2 Julie Lessiter from the EFA attended the last Schools Forum meeting and the feedback was that the papers were comprehensive, the discussion was robust and the decision making was clear.

3.3 Simon re-iterated the roles and responsibilities of the Schools Forum in that whilst the Local Authority, in most instances, has the decision making powers, that the Forum’s views are key in this process and that where voting takes place, this is an important mechanism to judge the overall consensus of the feedback.

3.4 It was requested that more information be provided regarding the levels of decision making, the relationship between schools, Schools Forum and Cabinet and how schools can inform decision making.

**3.5 Agreed: Further information is brought to the Schools Forum regarding the levels of decision making within the Local Authority. Also to share with the Forum a report recently presented to WCC Corporate Board detailing The School Improvement Strategy that formalises governance arrangements between schools and the LA in terms of schools role in the strategic decision making process.**

3.6 The Finance Director of Myton, who was attending the meeting as a representative, asked whether finance staff of schools should be represented at Schools Forum as funding issues are considered. Simon confirmed that the Academies decide who should represent them.

3.7 It was pointed out that although Schools Forum is a public meeting, it is not included on the WCC meetings calendar. Simon confirmed that Schools Forum meeting dates should be on the website and that the papers are within the Schools Forum area. (A check of this later identified that the meetings up until March 2013 had been included on the corporate meetings calendar but that the meetings after this point were not included. This has now been resolved)

3.8 Since the report was issued with the list of 2013/14 membership, Andrew Clay has been added to the membership as an Academy Head teacher

3.9 The Terms of Reference include a list of checks to be undertaken before reports are issued to Schools Forum to ensure consistent and comprehensive information is provided.

3.10 The re-election of Chair and Vice Chair was discussed and it was agreed that Diana Turner will continue as chair until the October meeting when re-election will take place.

**3.11 Agreed: election of Chair and Vice Chair to take place at the October meeting.**

3.12 It was confirmed that non-school members (except the PVI representative) cannot vote on school funding decisions.

3.12 Papers should be available 5 days in advance of a Schools Forum meeting. It was confirmed that for a meeting on Thursday, the papers must be distributed by midday on the Thursday before the meeting.

#### **4.0 Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2012/13**

4.1 Simon presented a report.

4.2 The table in the report at 4.1 shows the Detail of the Centrally Managed Services. Simon confirmed that the underspend shown as 'other' in this table was due to the capital programme not requiring revenue contribution.

4.3 Point 4.2 of the report states that hospital tuition funding will not be available during 2013/14 and Simon clarified that this area has historically underspent but new funding arrangements mean this has been top sliced and is now given out directly. Therefore the Authority has no access to the flexibility this has previously offered.

4.4 Point 4.2 of the report states that the £78,000 underspend in relation to Area Behaviour Partnership budget will be earmarked for use within 2013/14. Simon confirmed that the ABP allocations discussed at the last meeting were new year allocations and therefore did not include the underspend.

**4.5 Agreed: The General DSG Reserve is retained in full to assist in offsetting some of the spending pressures in 2013/14.**

4.6 The buyback of academy schools to WCC services was mentioned. This matter is not a Schools Forum issue but it was agreed that further details would be provided separately regarding reports presented to other committees regarding WES.

**4.7 Agreed: WES update reports to be circulated to the Forum.**

## **5.0 Update of the Review of the High Needs Block for 2013/14.**

5.1 Sarah Callaghan presented a report to update Forum members on the work being undertaken by Local Authority officers and the options being considered to ensure that services funded from the HNB budgets are commissioned following a structured approach to ensure value for money. The paper set out the budget pressure for six key funding streams, coming under the umbrella of the high needs block, totalling £3.876m. The paper detailed what actions are being taken to address this significant overspend.

5.2 The following comments were made:

5.2.1 It was suggested it would be helpful to know the make-up of the High Needs Funding Officer Group established to analyse and review the spending pressures within the High needs Block of the DSG.

**5.2.2 Agreed: This information will be included in the next update reports.**

5.2.3 There is a considerable range of provision across the county for SEN provision in mainstream schools. The actual cost of provision is not always met and this is a significant factor for a number of schools.

5.2.3 In terms of work stream 2 in Appendix A, the top up funding for Post 16 SEN (independent specialist providers and Further Education colleges), decisions regarding places are not being made until June. This is causing difficulties for special schools as they don't know if pupils who have applied for funding will be leaving. Sarah confirmed the authority is working with

Coventry LA to identify and develop local post 16 provision in order to reduce the number of out county specialist residential places. In addition the LA will work with special school head teachers to review provision of 19-25 education within the county and reduce Warwickshire's out county expenditure. It was recognised that this cannot be achieved without capital investment.

5.2.4 It was also noted that a bid has been submitted to the DfE for Targeted Basic Needs capital funding. The bid submitted is to develop special school provision in the county to address the current shortfall. We expect a decision at the end of June.

## **6.0 Strategy to support the placement of pupils with severe and complex educational needs in local specialist provision.**

6.1 Liz Holt presented a paper.

6.2 It was confirmed the Out of Local Authority allocation within the DSG is currently forecast to overspend by £2.946m. This figure was omitted from 1.1 of the report provided.

6.3 The following comments were made regarding the report:

6.3.1 The clarity and detail of the report was welcomed by several members of the forum.

6.3.2 The LA needs to work with Health and Social Care regarding residential care within county. A decision for a residential place is not only made because of distance issues. There are existing charity organisations that could run these.

6.3.3 We should consider the danger of congregating pupils in units as we may experience the same difficulties of the PRU.

6.3.4 Mainstream schools have to respond to individual needs. If parents choose a local mainstream school we need flexibility to fund this. Top up funding needs to be flexible so that schools can respond to individual needs.

6.3.5 Proposals include the reduction of requests for statutory assessment and the number of statements of special educational need. The report states that requests will be evaluated by a multi-professional panel and criteria will be clear and transparent. The panel will need to be fair but its' role should also make reference to ensuring each case is considered on its merits. The makeup and skill set of the panel will be important. In a time of scare resources and climate of financial cuts it is important that financial issues do not drive the decision making for individual cases.

6.3.6 The high level of referrals for statutory assessment reflects the tension that schools feel to meet the needs of pupils.

6.3.7 It was questioned whether the panel for statutory assessments would

enable the time it takes to go through the statement process to be improved. Liz stated that the authority's overall performance in meeting statutory deadlines is currently good although there is ambition to shorten the timescale.

6.3.8 Liz provided further details of the Witherslack Group, an independent provider referred to in the report who have purchased a vacant site in Rugby and aim to open a new school in November 2013. The school will be called Avon Park School and is on the former Paddox site. A head teacher has been appointed. Witherslack Group has indicated they are keen to work with ABPs. The intention is that the LA will negotiate competitive rates for places and, where possible, aim to move current pupils from out of local authority places to this in-county provision.

## **7.0 Primary Inclusion Support**

7.1 Sheila Dentith presented a report. Sheila gave apologies for Ross Caws the co-author of the report who was unable to attend the meeting.

7.2 The following comments were made:

7.2.1 To encourage pupil access to ISG, the Early Intervention Service monitor the ISG link with CAFF and have a close relationship and liaison with priority families.

7.2.2 The tables in Appendix 1 of the report show that the Rugby area has a higher number of pupils supported in ISG than other areas. It was asked whether there was any reason for this. Sheila explained that more sophisticated tables would be produced at the end of the academic year and more detailed evaluation would be provided. The tables provided in the report were 'broad brush'. There may have been some confusion between different areas over the whether tables included all pupils supported or just those at risk of permanent exclusion.

7.2.3 More "qualitative" analysis behind the raw data figures is required

7.2.3 The impact of ISG on attendance has been great. However, the impact this may have on other pupils in the classroom should not be ignored.

7.2.4 In terms of agreeing to the continuation of funding, it was agreed that more detailed evaluation was required.

7.3 Schools Forum have already agreed to an extension of existing funding to 31 March 2014 to enable provision to continue this year. A further report has been included on the forward plan which will include a full evaluation of the pilot and presentation of options for future provision.

## **8.0 General Dedicated Schools Grant Update**

8.1 Sara presented a report to update schools forum on DSG funding issues for 2014/15.

8.2 2014/15 DSG will be reduced to reflect that Carbon Reduction Commitment levy to schools has been removed. The methodology to be used is still out to consultation with Local Authorities. The amount of reduction in DSG for the current options is in excess of Warwickshire's current budget and actual costs. If any further information is available it will be brought to the special schools forum meeting to be arranged in the summer.

8.3 Feedback from the DFE regarding the funding reforms consultation is that changes will be made to the regulations regarding prior attainment data used for secondary schools and the introduction of a sparsity factor. Once firmer details are announced, analysis will be undertaken and reported to the Schools Forum.

## **9.0 The Revised Section 48 Scheme for Financing Schools**

9.1 A copy of the revised Scheme for Financing Schools and a paper detailing the changes was provided. Schools Forum approved the revisions to the scheme and no comments were raised.

## **10.0 Academy Update**

10.1 A current Position Statement on Status of Warwickshire Schools was provided.

## **11.0 Schools Forum - Forward Plan**

11.1 A Forward Plan containing a provisional programme of possible issues for Schools Forum to consider over the next year was provided.

## **12.0 Chairs Business**

12.1 None.

## **13.0 Next Meeting**

13.1 The next main meeting will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013, Conference Room, Northgate House, Warwick at 2pm.

An additional meeting to re visit the Secondary Alternative Provision Allocations has been arranged for Monday June 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 at Saltisford, Building One, Conference Room 1&2.