

## Schools Forum

### December 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 - Minutes

<b>Forum Members Present:</b>	
Stella Saje - Chair	Primary Headteacher
Diana Turner – Vice Chair	Academy Governor
Jane Burrows (David Kelham)	Academy Governor
Chris Smart	Primary Governor
Latika Davis	Primary Governor
Philip Johnson	Primary Governor
Larry Granelly	Primary Governor
Phil Clucas	Primary Governor
Cathy Clarke	Primary Headteacher
Gill Humphriss	Primary Headteacher
Chris Errington	Primary Headteacher
Richard Hawkins	Primary Headteacher
Ranjit Samra	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Tony Wilmot	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Patsy Weighill	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Andrew Clay	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Judith Humphry	Special School Headteacher
Amanda King (Rachel Gillett)	Nursery School Head Teacher
Sybil Hanson	Diocesan Board of Education
Steve Dyke	PVI Representative
Andy Summers	Trade Union Representative
<b>Non Members Present:</b>	
Keith Howkins	EFA (Observer)
Ian Froggett	Union Representative NAS/UWT, Chair of ATP
Sam Kincaid	Trade Union Representative
Cllr Timms	Elected Member
Cllr Whitehouse	Elected Member
Sara Haslam	Schools Funding & Strategy Manager
Sarah Callaghan	Head of Service, Learning and Achievement
Wendy Fabbro	Strategic Director, People Group
Philip Edmundson	Service Manager, Learning & Performance
Ruth Waterman	Clerk

<b>Forum Members Apologies:</b>	
Philip Hamilton	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Peter Reaney	Academy Governor
Ramesh Srivastava	Secondary Governor
Lisa Capper	14-19 representative
June Tandy	Primary Governor
Margaret Buck	Catholic Diocese

### 1.0 Apologies

1.1 See above for all apologies.

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

2.1 Correction: 9.5 poorly worded. Amendment to be made accordingly (remove phrase 'as mainstream provision will never meet pupils needs.')

2.2 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

## **3.0 Special Schools Nursery Funding (Sara Haslam)**

3.1 Sara Haslam presented the report outlining the proposed changes to the methodology of funding nursery children in special schools from April 2014 and asked Schools Forum to agree to these changes and consider the timescale for transition.

3.2 One comment was made regarding the omission of school's reserve figures from the report. If reserves are healthy then it could be that the transition could be made within 2 years rather than 3.

3.3 With reference to the option outlined in 3.2, it was noted that this money is not there to reinvest as it is a deficit situation.

3.4 Judith Humphry, representing Special School headteachers, advised that special schools have discussed the changes and accepted there needs to be a reduction. Judith explained that special school budgets are volatile and so a significant reduction in the budget needs to be managed carefully and a reasonable transition time is essential. She also reassured members that as funding is used globally in the school, any "over funding" of nursery provision has supported education elsewhere in the school.

3.5 Amanda King, representing Early Years, gave examples and noted that nursery schools often provide for pupils with high SEN but with no current funding support. This contributes to the financial pressures facing EY providers.

3.6 One comment was made in relation to the consultation not being as broad as it should have been although it was noted that this has been picked up and rectified later on in the process.

### **3.7 The Forum agreed the following:**

- **To recommend the proposal to Cabinet for nursery funding in special schools to be based on actual pupil numbers rather than a guaranteed place funding approach.**
- **To a transitional period of 3 years.**
- **To the transfer of any released funding which should be ring fenced for early intervention and SEN support for 0 to 5 year olds in non-specialist early years settings.**

### **4.0 Development of Schools Consortia arrangements (Sarah Callaghan)**

4.1 Sarah Callaghan presented the report and provided background on the consortia model. The following comments were made:

- Further clarity was requested around paragraph 6.2 and the development of a 'profit driven' model. Sarah explained that this would need developing as a business model before proper consideration is given to this however the idea is to develop quality assurance and central commissioning of services for the consortia that would increase the economies of scale and so allow savings to be reinvested into consortia.
- Emphasis on this being a model driven by schools, not the LA and ensuring that schools have the opportunity to tell the LA what they need.
- LA recognises that there is a gap in the current model for Early Years and Post-16 and that this needs to be filled. It was noted that private providers don't have the same buying power as larger schools and it is important that this sector is involved.
- Questions were raised about the role of academy sponsors in the model, as they are already contracted by the DfE to provide school improvement model to the academy school.
- Trade Unions are key stakeholders and need to be included in this model.
- There was some concern from head teachers that they had not been consulted on the new model and that consortia groupings had been imposed which are not workable. They also asked how the work of the consortia would be quality assured. Sarah advised that the groups should be determined by schools themselves but if this is not the case then schools should notify the LA. An Impact Evaluation Model framework is being developed and shared with Improvement Boards so that progress and outcomes can be measured. The intention is not to develop a uniform way of consortia working but to allow consortia to develop different ways of working.

- Ongoing dialogue with Elected Members would be best done through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Some school governors not entirely clear what their role is and how they will be involved as key stakeholders. It was suggested that this should be discussed and confirmed at the Governors Steering Group.
- Head teachers welcomed the opportunity to influence the strategic decision making process and prefer it to be a developing model rather than imposed.

**ACTION: Circulate the terms of reference for the Improvement Boards, membership and links between the key stakeholders to Forum members.**

**ACTION: Recirculate the 2-page synopsis of Wigan model to members.**

**ACTION: Role of governors to be taken to Steering Group as future agenda item.**

**ACTION: Special Schools and Early Years to be included in the Impact Evaluation Model.**

**AGREED: Members recommended the proposal that People Group committed the same amount of reserves to the consortia model for the financial year 2014/15.**

## **5.0 Area Behaviour Panel Update (Steve Pendleton)**

5.1 Steve Pendleton presented the progress report on the Secondary Area Behaviour Partnerships in 2012/13. The following comments were made:

- Secondary head teachers commented that the partnerships are working well and they appreciate the greater flexibility that these bring. Central ABP requested that funding be put in line with national deprivation funding which is now based on FSM6, rather than FSM3 and includes LAC and Service Children. It was noted that the methodology used for 12/13, the period being reported on, was FSM3 however this was changed to FSM6 from April 2013. It was also noted that the option to include LAC and Service Children in the allocation data was feasible.
- Secondary head teacher members urged the LA to carefully consider, and if possible, increase the amount of funding for ABPs, given the dramatic impact this has had on the reduction of permanent exclusions.

Additional funding would also help to embed these structures which are still relatively new and fragile.

- It was noted that there may be a greater call on High Needs Funding under the new arrangements and concern that funding would be ring fenced for more tangible SEN needs, rather than behavioural needs.
- A query was raised around the quality assurance of alternative providers; who carries this out to ensure provision is quality and fit for purpose. Steve confirmed that quality assurance visits are made to all providers, and contracts are checked to ensure standards are being met. Inspections have verified that these standards are currently being met.
- A concern was also raised about the safety and suitability of the buildings / equipment at Shaftsbury. However, Steve confirmed that the site was fully inspected and they were satisfied it met the required standards. The premises are rented at a fair market rate which was negotiated and a contract is in place. He added that Shaftsbury wish to consult with the LA about the possibility of developing an alternative provision Free School. The LA is currently at the stage of consulting with relevant parties about their response to this.
- Some members felt that additional figures could be provided to understand the extent of the issues referred to on page 4, para 12. It was noted that the numbers of KS3 pupils whose needs could not be met were between 10 and 20 and that as schools use a variety of means to tackle this it can be difficult to quantify the numbers.
- Some more information regarding the issues with IYFAP would be useful to determine if this is a real problem. However, Steve noted that they have recognised this issue and are reviewing the policy.
- Some concern was noted that there is an inequity in provision across the county.

5.2 Forum members thanked Steve for the report and were pleased to see the impact that this has had on the numbers of pupils excluded from school.

## **6.0 Primary ISG Update (Philip Edmundson)**

6.1 Philip Edmundson presented a revised report, requested by Schools Forum at the October meeting, to provide further clarity around the funding for primary ISGs. The following comments were made:

- 'Revising the ISG commission' (page 11, para 6.11) – would like this paragraph removed to reflect previous discussions that it is the LAs responsibility to support these children.

- Governance arrangements need to be explored to ensure there are clear protocols in place for dealing with complaints and the impact on the staff also considered, given that the child will have contact with three providers: the home school, specialist ISG and school where ISG is located.
- Discussion was had around the tendering process and the commission of the in house EIS to deliver specialist ISG support and it was recommended that the tendering exercise for this service should be done independently of the LA. It was also suggested that primary schools should have some say in how funding is allocated although the difficulties of consulting with all primary schools for the allocation of relatively small amounts of money was raised as a concern. It was noted that Schools Forum is the consultation body for this process.
- Some concerns about transition arrangements were raised although it was noted that each ISG has submitted a costed transition plan for the summer term. There was some concern about reducing the funding too soon and without knowing what impact this will have. The T&F Group were also keen that PLCs outside of the pilots should have the opportunity to replicate the work done in other ISGs.
- As part of the evaluation, the impact on other pupils in the mainstream school was considered and this is something that needs to be monitored.
- It was suggested that it may be useful to track the impact of the work of ISGs in secondary.

**ACTION: Further report to be presented to Schools Forum providing details of the transition plans for ISGs once these have been collated by the Task & Finish Group.**

## **7.0 Mental Health Interventions for School Children (MHISC) Report (Andrew Sjurseth)**

7.1 Andrew Sjurseth presented the report outlining the outcomes achieved to date through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded MHISC framework to provide mental health interventions to school children with an open Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The report was welcomed and commended by members who were in full support of the process.

**AGREED: Members noted the outcomes achieved to date and agreed to the recommendation that the DSG funding continues for the MHISC framework for two further years until March 2016, at £150,000 per financial year.**

## **8.0 Capital Update including decision making criteria (Sara Haslam)**

8.1 Sara Haslam presented the report to provide a greater understanding for Forum members on capital spend and the criteria as to how schools are selected for both the Local Authority Capital Programme and the DfE Targeted Bids Programme. This was in response to a request made at the October meeting.

- It was noted that parental choice often impacts on the need to expand certain schools
- A question was raised as to whether the pupil forecasts used for the expansion programme were checked against the actual pupil numbers to understand the accuracy of the forecasting process
- With regard to the DfE Targeted Bids Programme, it was noted that the DfE only seem to take into consideration urban situations whereas the reality in rural areas is that the nearest school can be much further than 2 or 3 miles away. Schools Forum members asked if the LA could take this back to the DfE.
- Some further clarification asked for around a policy for combining infant and junior schools, and also how the criteria is practically applied. Peter Speers to be invited to a future meeting.
- Clarification requested on Appendix B (proposals for 2013/14 Capital Programme) and meaning of third column 'Consult' - does 'Y' mean that consultation has happened or that it will need to happen? Sara will clarify.
- It was noted that communication can often be an issue with other schools in the area not being aware of changes or developments that might affect them, and they are not always aware of why certain decisions have been made. Sarah Callaghan took these comments on board and suggested that the new School Improvement Boards could be a forum for consulting on these issues in future.

**ACTION: Invite Peter Speers, Service Manager for Access and Inclusion to a future meeting to explain how the criteria is practically applied and the strategy going forward.**

**ACTION: Sarah Callaghan to pick up concerns around communication with schools of new capital projects, possibly through School Improvement Boards.**

**ACTION: Sara to clarify whether the specific meaning of the “consult” column on Appendix B regarding the capital programme proposals for 2013/14.**

**ACTION: Sara to feed back to the DfE capital department about the use of the 2 and 3 miles in the expansion criteria.**

## **9.0 Academy Update (Sara Haslam)**

9.1 A current Position Statement on the Status of Warwickshire Schools was provided and noted by members.

9.2 One query was raised regarding the timescale from when an academy sponsor takes over and a governing body must be in place and the role of the Local Authority if this timeframe is not met. A particular academy was mentioned.

**ACTION: Philip Edmundson agreed to follow up this particular academy.**

## **10.0 Forward Plan (Chair)**

10.1 One item to be added to the Forward Plan: Schools Capital Programme, Peter Speers.

## **11.0 Chair’s Business**

11.1 Wendy Fabbro updated Members on the recruitment campaign for a new Head of Service for Learning and Achievement and reassured colleagues that the Local Authority are committed to ensuring senior managers are in place to take forward their responsibilities.

11.2 Colleagues will be advised shortly with details of the Interim HoS and a full recruitment campaign will go ahead in January for the permanent post. It is likely that the interim will be in post for the spring term until a permanent appointment is made.