

Schools Forum

Thursday 22 June 2023

Minutes

- Minutes and actions from 22 June 2023

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WARWICKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**Voting and Actions of the meeting held on 22nd June 2023****Meeting Place: Harris Sports Centre 79 Mellish Rd, Rugby 14:00 – 16:00 pm****SCHOOL FORUM MEMBERS**

Alison Davies	The Avon Valley School (Maintained)
Amy Woodward	North Leamington School (Academy)
Andy Mason	Stratford Upon Avon School (Academy)
Avie Kaur	Representative from a Teacher's Union
Claire Jeffs-Watts	Bridgetown School (Maintained Primary School)
Jane Burrows	Myton School (Academy)
Joss Andrews	Dunchurch Infant School and Nursery (Maintained)
Julia Lucas	Coventry Church of England Diocese Representative
Mary Anne Burrows	PVI-The Burrow Nursery & Pre-School
Michael Cowland	The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust
Nicci Burton	Atherstone and Bedworth Heath Nursery School (Maintained)
Paul Hostead	The Warwickshire Academy (Special Academy)
Philip Johnson	Whitestone Infant School (Maintained Governor)
Rebecca Harrison	Park Hill Thorns Federation (Maintained)
Sarah Bromley	PVI - Castle Nursery
Siobhan Roberson	Harris Church of England School (Academy)

OFFICERS/OBSERVERS

Andrew Felton	Assistant Director - Finance
Brian Smith	Education, Children and Families Technical Specialist
Councillor Kam Kaur	Portfolio Holder for Education
Dalbir Kaur	Accountant, Children & Education - Clerk to Schools Forum
Ross Caws	Strategy and Commissioning Lead
Sophie Thompson	School Improvement Networks Lead Officer

1. Apologies and welcomed two new members (Chair)**Apologies were received from the following members and Officers:**

Alison Ramsay	Nicholas Chamberlaine School (Academy)
Bern Timings	Education Capital, Sufficiency, and Admissions Lead Commissioner
Carrie Clare	Park Lane Primary & Race Leys Junior
Duane Chappell	Strategy & Commissioning Manager (SEND)
Emma Basden-Smith	Education Capital, Sufficiency and Transport Lead Commissioner
Jane Carter	Education Delivery Lead
Johnny Kyriacou	Assistant Director - Education Services
Kamaljit Kaur	Senior Accountant (Team Lead) Children & Education
Mandy Latham	Early Years Entitlement, Sufficiency and Business Lead Commissioner
Nick Evans	Evergreen School (Special Maintained)
Paul Gillett	Representative from a Teacher's Union
Peter Husband	16-19 Partnership Sector
Purnima Sherwood	Service Manager for Finance
Ricky Emms	The Priors School (Academy)
Sybil Hanson	Coventry Church of England Diocese Representative

Note: Chair welcomed the two new members - Claire Jeffs-Watts and Paul Hostead to schools forum.

The following members did not attend and did not give their apologies:

Catherine Crisp
Rose Gunn

Hillmorton Primary School Rugby (Maintained)
Arden Forest Infant School (Maintained)

2. Voting and Actions from the Last Meeting (Chair)

Agreed

No Action

Matters for decision:

3. Update on Schools Forum membership (Dalbir Kaur)

We had four vacant posts in March. Clerk sent email to the relevant sectors to call for expression of Interest.

The Primary Maintained Schools post and Special Academy post is filled now. The two new members are:
Claire Jeffs-Watts – Business manager at Bridgetown School (Maintained Primary School)
Paul Hostead – Headteacher at The Warwickshire Academy (Special Academy)

We did not receive any interest from Secondary Academy Schools. Therefore, there are still two vacant posts for Secondary Academy School's head teachers or representatives.

4. De-delegation & Disapplication Consultation Timetable 2024-2 (Brian Smith)

Recommendation:

The Representatives from maintained schools are asked to approve:

- a) The timetable for de-delegation Consultation for 2024-25.

Voting: Approved by Maintained school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) member asked to add an article about the de-delegation consultation in heads Up

Action: SF clerk sent this article to Heads Up

All Schools Forum representatives are asked to approve:

- b) The estimated timetable for any potential need to consult with schools on the National Funding Formula and any potential transfers between funding blocks, for example, from the schools Block DSG to the High Needs Block.

Voting: Approved by all school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) members asked/discussed:

- If part of 0.5% can go to Early Years (EY) as well. Also, SF members recognise that the High Needs is difficult area
- SF members want transparency on 0.5% block movements

- Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Officer's reply for the two points above - we are open to discussion on this, such movements can be requested for specific reasons/demand/pressure in a particular block but at end of the day all the transfer does is contribute to/support the overall budget of the recipient block. EY block is participation-based funding, means that funding is based on actual pupil numbers in LA which includes all maintained schools, academies and PVI's therefore Early Years will not be under pressure.
- What and where Resource provision are in schools
- What is the capital planning for the next few years for schools
- WCC Officer's reply for the two points above, The Council is opening four more resourced provisions in Rugby and Nuneaton in September. The Council has a 5-year capital strategy which is focussing on expanding resourced provision (with an emphasis on secondary resourced provision) as well as expanding Evergreen and Oak Wood special schools.
- SF Like to see speedy resolution to High need deficits
- Schools Forum member asked - do we just nod to everything and sit here for two hours - Clerk will send Schools Forum operational and Schools forum power and responsibilities document. Also it can be accessed by clicking [here](#). The Local Authorities have responsibility for establishing schools forums

Action: SF Clerk to send Schools Forum operational and Schools forum power and responsibilities document

5. Update on Section 48-Scheme for Financing Schools (Brian Smith)

Recommendations:

The **maintained school representatives** are asked to approve:

- a) The maintained school representatives of Schools Forum are asked to approve the updated Scheme (which reflects the same proposed changes brought to March's Schools Forum meeting).

Voting: Approved by Maintained school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) member discussed:

- Section 48-Scheme for Financing Schools has very important information
- Schools Governors/leaders should read Scheme for financing of schools. Any deficits in schools should be highlighted at early stage and remedial action taken
- WCC picks up bills of forced academisations of school when they have deficits

Action: No Action

Matters for Information/Comment:

6. Dedicated School Grant Outturn Position 2022-23 (Brian Smith)

Recommendations:

The Schools Forum is recommended to note:

- a) The DSG financial outturn position for 2022/23.
 - The total DSG allocation for Warwickshire was £523.653M
 - The final DSG outturn position for 2022/23 is an overspend of £3.930m

- The DfE have required all local authorities to complete a recovery plan should the expenditure variance on the DSG exceed 1%
- The outturn position of £3.930m equates to a 0.79% overspend of the total original DSG allocation, which is within the DfE threshold
- This is primarily due to increase in placements on ISP's and Mainstream top ups within the High Needs Block
- The pressures on the High Needs Block is a national issue
- The financial position is being closely monitored as part of the DSG recovery plan.
- There is a small underspend of £0.103m on the Schools block
- High Needs overspend of £4.436m. This overspend excludes the £15.980m cumulative deficit from previous years
- Overall, Early Years underspent by £0.408m net position
- There are small overspends of £0.006m in Central Schools Services Block

Schools Forum (SF) members asked/discussed:

- If Early Years reserves are ring fenced
- WCC Officer's reply – Legally and in final accounts of WCC the DSG reserve is a single reserve. However, WCC does track/keep a record of the amounts each blocks year end variance to budget has contributed to the overall DSG reserve
- There was only 70% up take for Early Years Recovery fund. We anticipated that all providers would take up the offer. The offer was for 6 types of Training packages to support improvement and capacity by all providers
- The High Needs Block table is not on the report – Clerk to re-send Item 6 with the draft voting and action paper
- Could all reports show underspend in black not in red. (and vice versa). This will be the format taken going forward

Action:

1. Clerk to send Item 6 DSG 2022-23 Outturn report (that includes the High Needs table) to all Schools Forum members with voting and actions paper
2. Future reports to show underspend in black not in red

7. DSG Recovery Plan (Ross Caws)

Recommendations:

The Schools Forum members are asked to note the verbal update on the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme.

First, Ross Caws explained that this is a time to reflect on the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme and plan for a new phase of work this is due to:

- Changes in leadership - Duane Chappell has left Warwickshire County Council and Ross Caws is Acting Head of SEND & Inclusion
- The Council is about to start the DfE Delivering Better Value scheme (which is to produce an action plan very similar to the Change Programme with associated funding)
- Broadly speaking, the change programme is nearing completion of many stage 2 projects and not started original phase 3 projects
- The Council is reconsidering its governance for SEND as it nears completion of the Written Statement of Action
- The long-term financial forecast on the High Needs Block is being updated

Ross Caws also brought attention to:

- The system is under pressure with increases in permanent exclusions, referrals for children unable to attend school for health reasons and requests for EHC needs assessment and specialist provision
- The High Needs Block is overspent. The outturn of over £4m overspend was less than originally forecast at the start of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme, but still adds to a cumulative deficit
- It remains that changing practice in Warwickshire can reduce the current overspend on the High Needs Block but not eradicate it

Schools Forum (SF) member discussed/asked:

- How long the alternative provision should be used for
- WCC officer's reply - Alternative provision should be used for 10 weeks at a time or as part of a transition; the spend on alternative provision has significantly increased in the last year and needs to be looked at again
- SF Member asked - What do you want us to do with recovery plan
- WCC officer's reply - Schools Forum must agree recovery plans and then hold officers to account for delivery of recovery plans
- What progress was made with the change programme, why it is stopped and why the system is not working
- WCC officer's reply - No new projects are being started in the Change Programme for the moment. It is an expectation of the DfE that we take part in the Delivering Better Value scheme. It should also allow the Council to access additional funding (the Council has funded £3m of transformation work so far). Costs of independent specialist provision are increasing
- Place funding for state special schools has not changed since 2014
- We are seeing a higher level of need coming through in our Early Years cohorts. Specialisms in early years settings still require further exploring, in particular with our nursery schools.
- The national system for SEND is recognised as broken and unsustainable. The DfE has plans in place, but there is likely to be a long timeline on implementation of these plans

Action: We want stability in this area especially in SEN change programme and that is what we are working on

8. Forward Plan (Dalbir Kaur)

The next SF meeting is on 28th September via Teams.

There is one paper for decision. It is on De-delegation for 2024-25 and five items for information and comments.

The next meeting after this will be in November (TBC) – to request transfer of 0.5% from the schools Block DSG.

If there is any item that schools forum members want to add to the agenda or to the forward plan, please send it to schoolfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk email address with the relevant information.

Also, Schools Forum members can send me an email if they want any specific information on reports or if they have any questions on reports.

9. Chairs Business (Philip Johnson)

Chair thanked Duane Chappell for her work over the years who has moved to a new adventure.

Chair also, thanked Kamaljit Kaur for her service. Kamaljit provided a cover for Stephanie Phillips during her maternity leave is leaving in July 2023. Stephanie Phillips will be back in July 2023.

Meeting concluded at 15:45pm.

**Next Meeting on Thursday 28th September 2023, 2:00pm to 4:00
Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams**

DRAFT