

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 3 July 2018 **at 1.00 pm at Whitmore High School**

Members Present: Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)
Ian Noutch – Academy High School Finance Manager
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands School
Pam Virdee – Headteacher, Longfield School (VICE CHAIR)
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School
Paul Gamble – Headteacher, Harrow High School
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School

Officers in Attendance: Jo Frost - Finance Business Partner
Brian Netto – Head of Early Years (Item 4 only)

SH opened the meeting.

1. Apologies and Order of the Agenda

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Sarbdip Noonan – Principal, Stanmore College
Paul Hewitt – Director of Children's Services
Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School
Claudia Calogero – Governor, Hillview Nursery School
Keven Bartle – Headteacher, Canons High School
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Anne Monahan – Headteacher, St Anselm's Primary School
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix
Nigel Hewett - AHGB Representative

The order of the agenda was agreed.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 15 May 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 were agreed as an accurate record

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund

BN introduced the report which set out proposals for the use of the Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund from the previous year.

BN confirmed that the proposals ensured that 100% would be passed to providers. It is anticipated that the use of the Inclusion Fund will lead to better feedback from schools that pupils coming through are better prepared.

BN explained that from 2018-19 the funding per child has been increased as feedback from schools and other providers is that funding was too low in 2017-18. There were a number of settings not accessing the fund even though there was data that indicated they had eligible children.

SH queried whether PVLs and schools are required to have a SEND register

BN explained that it is not mandatory but that the Early Years Service are working with settings to ensure they all keep a register and submit it to the LA quarterly.

SH queried why not all settings are applying – is it that settings are overstretched and don't have the capacity or capability of applying? SH asked if the process could be made easier so that all settings get the funding they are due

BN explained that in future EY Service is planning to attach the SEND register to the form so that settings are told which children are eligible

LB stated that it needs to be made more clear that more than one child can be claimed for on one application

BN clarified that this does need to be made clearer and that as long as the children are named individually this is acceptable. BN explained that it is not possible to fully quality assure what providers say they spend the funding on and SEND training and practice is not necessarily embedded in the culture of settings but EY Service will quality assure a sample from a number of settings.

IN suggested that it is more important that the money gets out to providers rather than having an in depth oversight as to how they are spending it.

Schools Forum agreed to earmark the underspend from 2017-18 to fund the proposals as set out in the paper.

PG stated that the report was well put together

Schools Forum thanked BN for his report.

5. DSG Budget Monitoring Month 2 2018-19

JF introduced the report which set out the DSG budget monitoring position for month 2. Overall there is a projected net overspend of £1.2m as a result of pressures on the High Needs Block. JF explained that the final allocation for the HNB is £2.9m lower than the 2017-18 budget through the HN National Funding Formula.

JF proposed that the overspend is funded from the schools brought forward contingency. RH asked what happens if Schools Forum does not agree to this. JF explained that the deficit would fall to the Local Authority. JF stated that the LA possibly has a right to appeal to the Secretary of State if it did not agree with the Schools Forum decision.

POD explained that demand locally is not reducing and the number of EHCPs have increased from 1640 in January 2018 to 1700 by mid June 2018 and there have been 243 new requests for

assessments, not including movers in, since September 2017. POD explained that the strategy is to bring young people back to Harrow but it is challenging if families don't want this and there is a capacity issue with local provision. AS added that there is an increase in medical complex needs that hasn't been seen before.

POD referred to the SEND Strategy which Schools Forum had received a paper in the previous meeting which will seek to reduce demand and pressures on the HNB.

IN asked about the LA's progression in relation to the costed plans banding work and timescales for rolling out.

POD explained that approx. 50 plans have been mapped onto the proposed matrix. In the main existing plans transferred well into the matrix. The behaviour strand needs to be better described and it hasn't proved suitable for those young people with hearing and visual impairments so this would need to be reviewed. POD stated that a paper would be brought to Schools Forum in the Autumn term. SH requested an action plan with a timetable so that schools are properly consulted.

ACTION POD

It was agreed that Schools Forum would review the position on the HNB in the Autumn term and seek to make a decision on the use of the contingency to support the HNB at that point. PG suggested that Schools Forum might consult with all schools before making this decision.

IN queried the level of funding for expansion classes in the Growth Fund. JF explained that this was the lump sum funding schools in the expansion programme receive and that each school would receive this funding every year for 7 years until the expansion had moved through the whole school. JF explained that schools which take bulge classes also receive this funding but only in the year the bulge class opens. JF also explained that schools which were part of the expansion programme but which did not have the extra pupils and did not therefore open an extra class, do not receive the funding. However, due to infant class size regulations and parental preference, if a school has capacity in its PAN to take pupils if parents choose, then the LA/school cannot refuse to accept them. This could mean that schools are having to open classes for a small number of pupils which can cause funding problems in future years.

SH stated that the LA can direct a maintained school to reduce its PAN. SH queried what the LA is doing to ensure that there are not lots of half empty reception classes across the borough.

SH requested a report on the strategy to manage down the number of reception vacancies through managing PANS and the numbers of reception vacancies and PANs in September 2018.

ACTION POD

6. Schools Forum Dates 2018-19

Schools Forum agreed the proposed dates for the 2018-19 academic year as set out on the agenda with the exception of May 2019 which primary reps requested be brought forward one week to 7th May 2019 so it did not clash with SATs.

Any Other Business

- a) IN raised a query about the Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children which has increased from £1900 to £2300 but that the extra £400 won't be passed to schools. POD explained that schools can still bid for this funding. SH said that there is a need to further communicate where this funding is being spent.

POD suggested that Mellina Williamson-Taylor, Head teacher of the Virtual School talk to primary and secondary heads. This was agreed.

ACTION POD

Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The next meeting will take place on 11 September 2018 at 1.00 pm at Whitmore High School.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm