

Schools Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 13 September 2022 at 1.00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)
Chris Briggs – Headteacher, St Joseph's Primary School (VICE CHAIR)
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury School
Patrick O'Dwyer – Divisional Director Education Services
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School
Steven Deanus – Headteacher, Roxeth Primary School
Lee Helyer – Headteacher, Kingsley High School
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Mike Baumring – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix Education Centre
Nick Waldron – Headteacher, Pinner Park Primary School
Sarah Marriott – Headteacher, Pinner Wood Primary School
Collette O'Dwyer – Headteacher, Park High School
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, The Sacred Heart School
Rashid Bensserghin – Headteacher, Roxbourne Primary School

Officers in Attendance: Jo Frost – Finance Business Partner

SH opened the meeting.

1 Apologies and Order of the Agenda

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Sash Hamidi – Executive Headteacher, The Pegasus Partnership Trust

The order of the agenda was agreed.

2 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were agreed.

3 Matters Arising

Action carried forward from meeting 16 November 2022.

Is it possible to track a cohort of students from mainstream secondary provision and the cost of the EHCP compared with cost of college provision. Request extended to include primary to secondary.

JF fed back that it had been difficult to track a child from high school to college and compare spend as the number of hours and type of support varied between settings. However, on average the support at college is approx £30 per hour.

There was a discussion about the equity between schools and colleges when the latter is receiving double the amount per hour for the same student. POD explained that the funding systems are different. The DfE encourages colleges to ensure they receive adequate funding from local authorities whilst at the same time LAs are told to commission more effectively. This does not leave the LA in a strong position as there is limited provision available and settings can refuse to take children. The law says the LA has to make provision up to 25yo and if a setting refuses a child, ultimately they would have to go somewhere else, possibly the independent sector.

There was a query about whether schools should refuse to take children without additional funding. POD explained that the LA has never said it would stand in the way of meeting a child's needs in order to mitigate the HNB deficit and is intending to get the funding reviews under way and actively recruiting capacity to deliver these.

Update on new entrants to Harrow schools since October 2021 Schools Census

SH queried what the net inflow/outflow pupil position is since October 2021 census.

ACTION POD

4 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Lou Browning stood down as Vice Chair. Schools Forum thanked Lou Browning for her work in this role.

Sue Hammond was nominated and seconded for the role of Chair

Chris Briggs was nominated and seconded for the role of Vice Chair

5 DSG Budget Setting 2023-23

JF introduced the report which set out the changes to school funding in 2023-24 and indicative school budgets based on the October 2021 schools census.

There was a discussion about the increasing impact of energy bills on school budgets. There was a query as to whether there would be any government support to schools and some members indicated seeing mention of support to local government and schools but no details have been released yet.

There was also concern raised about other spiralling costs such as supplies & services and teaching and non-teaching pay increases.

POD introduced the context regarding the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokerage grant. POD explained that a consultation with maintained schools would be opened on 26 September with a closing date of 3 October 2022.

6 DSG Budget Monitoring Q1 2022-23

JF introduced the report which set out the DSG budget projection for 2022-23.

SM queried the trigger funding mechanism which doesn't factor in mobility.

SM and RB also queried whether the 2% threshold could be reviewed

SH explained that this would likely result in more schools being eligible for funding but at a lower value. SH suggested member should vote on the threshold

Option A) 2% threshold – 11 votes

Option B) a lower threshold – 1 vote

The threshold of 2% was agreed and it was agreed that the trigger funding as proposed in the report be distributed to relevant schools in September.

Schools Forum discussed the earmarked and non-earmarked funding in the contingency. There is £1.7m of funding not currently earmarked. SH suggested that a paper be brought to the November Schools Forum meeting which included proposals for utilizing this funding. Suggested items include

- Contribute to school budgets for 2023-24 in line with NFF
- Contribute to High Needs Block deficit
- Fund loss of SIMB grant for up to three years
- SEND funding for schools during EHCP assessment period
- Support to schools for energy costs
- Support strategic work being undertaken to enable more children to stay in mainstream schools

7 Any Other Business

There was a query about whether the November meeting would be held in person or remotely on Zoom. Schools Forum members voted 7 remote and 5 in person. The next meeting will be held remotely on Zoom.

POD wished to formally thank Lee Helyer, Folake Agbaniyaka, Caroline Daylewis and all other colleagues who are supporting and contributing to the Kingsley expansion at Weald Rise.

The meeting closed at 2.40pm