

## Minutes of Schools Forum Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at The Civic Centre, Reading

**Present:** Jo Budge - Head Teacher of Blagdon Nursery  
 Justin McMinn - Head Teacher of E P Collier  
 Simon Uttley - Head Teacher of Blessed Hugh Farringdon  
 Marie Belcher - Representing Ashley Robson - Head Teacher of Reading School  
 Andrew Johnson - Head Teacher of Maiden Erlegh (Reading)  
 Ali McNamara - NUT  
 Laura Ellenor - Head of JMA  
 Karen Edwards - Head of The Heights  
 Tonia Crossman - Head of Emmer Green  
 John Cosgrove - Head of Christ the King (Chair)  
 Cath Doberska - Head of English Martyrs

**RBC:** Steven Davies - Education & Schools Business Partner  
 Paul Wagstaff - Head of Education  
 Cllr Ashley Pearce - Lead Member for Education

**Apologies:** Peter Kayes - Governor at Ridgeway  
 Isabelle Sandy - Business Manager at Kendrick  
 Richard Rolfe - Governor at Micklands  
 Phil Davis - Head of Prospect  
 Mandy Wilton - Head of Cranbury College

### STANDING ITEMS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018</b>
	Minutes were agreed from 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Schools Forum Membership Update</b>
	<p>Steven Davies presented.</p> <p>There are currently 4 vacancies for Schools Forum Members. Schools have been asked for representatives. A few names were put forwards as being interested in the roles however they are not in attendance this evening.</p> <p>There is also no representative at a governor level for maintained nurseries. A Governor is interested in the role and Jo Budge will follow up.</p> <p>Cathy Doberska from English Martyrs re-joins Schools forum to cover one of two vacant Maintained Primary places and Stieve Butler from Meadow Park will cover one of the two vacant Academy Primary places.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>DSG Budget Monitoring 2018 - 2019</b>
	Steven Davies presented.

	<p>The current allocations for 18/19 are shown in paragraph 5.1, Table 2. The totals are split into Local Authority allocations &amp; Academies Recoupment for each block.</p> <p>The Budget Monitoring table (Annex 1) shows a £2.2m overspend for 18/19 based on the current forecast. This variance was £2.9m in March 2017 so has dropped by £0.7m. The majority of the overspend relates to the High Needs Block. This should reduce after SCP's.</p> <p>Early Years Block - This is based on the previous year's census data and is updated in July of the following year. Early Years numbers have decreased in Reading over the last few years and so Reading can claw back £900k of funding from 17/18 in July 2018.</p> <p>High Needs Block - There have been some 'quick wins' in this area as a few high budget children have left which has reduced overall spend.</p> <p>Schools Block - Looking at potential vacancies in reception classes in Sept 2018 due to previous school expansions and drop in birth rate. This will affect maintained budgets from April 2019. The Schools Based Data return is being finalised for return at end of July. This will give an idea of numbers of children coming through in local areas. Figures do show an upward shift for Primary in some areas. The data return will be distributed around schools for their information. It needs to be decided how the growth budget (100k) can be used to help struggling schools in the future. This is to be agreed at Schools Forum.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Maintained Schools Balances 18-19 - Excess Balances</b>
	<p>Steven Davies presented.</p> <p>May 2018's report had the extended schools balance included for nurseries which was incorrect. Norcot &amp; Blagrove have now been excluded from the list.</p> <p>Excess Balance is a balance of more than 8% for Primary's and 5% for Secondary's. Schools Forum can ask to review the balances as was the case in the May 2018 meeting. A pro-forma went out to schools with an excess balance to fill in and return. All schools completed and returned this apart from All Saints and Wilson Primary. Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of the 17/18 returns with Appendix 2 showing balances over last 5 years.</p> <p>Schools Forum members are asked today if they would like to review and comment and/or ask for more information on these figures. Balances can be taken away at Schools Forum approval. An interest was declared by Cathy Doberska and Simon Uttley.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Although some schools have redundancy costs earmarked, these are not necessarily for teaching staff and some staff has been redeployed due to programme closures.</p> <p>Some Local Authorities ask schools to let them know that if they go over excess, if so this is taken away.</p> <p>No date is necessary for planned expenditure to take place.</p> <p>If the budget was taken back, it goes into Schools Forum 'pot'. This would not have impact on the Local Authority.</p> <p>If a deadline is in place, money could be spent for the sake of it. Prudent saving should be encouraged rather than spending the entire budget.</p> <p>Vote:</p> <p>Claw back this year - no votes</p> <p>Claw back at a future deadline - no votes</p> <p>Schools Forum to ask for information on balances again next year to compare - agreed</p>

	At the next year end, schools are to provide information on balances for May 2019 Schools Forum meeting. They will need to demonstrate expenditure as directed by their 17/18 breakdown.
<b>6.</b>	<b>High Needs Update</b>
	<p>Paul Wagstaff presented</p> <p>Helen Redding has been driving the SEND strategy. During the March meeting, an update was given on the suggested use of the Inclusion Support Allocation Funding of HN Block to develop an inter-school support model based on targeting resources and refining the provision of support consistently across the Borough.</p> <p>Strand 1 working group have considered Appendix A (Exceptional Needs Inclusion Support Funding) and have decided this proposal should go ahead. This also allows for Short Term funding for cover in schools. Overall, this will ensure funding is more equitable and assessable and overall more responsive to individual school's needs.</p> <p>It was commented that this proposal looks more 'common sense'. Schools Forum can see the hard work which has gone into the proposal. Schools will be able to respond to additional needs with an additional level of funding.</p> <p>Strand 1 have also discussed the proposed support to schools who require SEND support. Appendix B looks at supporting schools with a higher level of EHCP's than our statistical neighbours. This data uses the current census figures. The lines highlighted on the tables are inclusive of specialist provision figures and the data without is on the line below.</p> <p>The School to School Support model for SEND was also reviewed. The development of Specialist Leaders in Education (SLE's) and other SEND practitioners will go towards driving down support costs and giving a better value for money. Any saving made will go back to the Local Authority for in-school support. The current SEND support is in line with our statistical neighbours.</p> <p>It was noted that the reports were seen. Thanks to those who have taken part in reports and have taken time to discuss the needs and resources. Thanks to Helen Redding for her hard work in moving on the Local Authority in a short space of time.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Agenda Items For Future Meetings</b>
	<p>The next meeting will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (5pm) at the Civic Centre.</p> <p>Review of 2019 - 2020 Schools Formula Scheme of Finance Review</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p>Steve Davies will be leaving us as he is moving to new role as a Finance Analyst. Claire White (previously Schools Accountant for West Berkshire) replacing SD on interim basis.</p> <p>Schools Forum give their thanks to Steve for his support over the years.</p> <p>Future meetings for Schools Forum are to be in the Civic going forwards. Briefings will take place at Church End school.</p> <p>It was raised there may be a Primary Conference clash for the October meeting. This will be rescheduled if necessary.</p>