

**Minutes of Schools Forum Meeting
19th October 2017 at The Avenue Centre, Reading**

- Present:** Peter Kayes - Governor of Ridgeway (Chair)
 Jo Budge - Head of Blagdon Nursery
 Jean Read - Nursery Governor
 Tonia Crossman - Head of Emmer Green
 Richard Rolfe - Governor of Micklands
 Ali McNamara - Trades Unions
 Justine McMinn - Head of EP Collier
 John Cosgrove - Head of Christ the King
 Simon Uttley - Head of Blessed Hugh
 Rachel Cave - Head of Highdown
 Isabelle Sandy - Business Manager of Kendrick
 Mandy Wilton - Head of Cranbury
 Ita McGullion - PVI Nursery rep
 Jon Gargan - Principal of Reading Girls
- RBC:** Chris Kiernan - Head of Education
 Steven Davies - Principal Education and Schools Accountant
 Helen Redding - Interim Head of SEN
 Cllr Eileen McElligott - Chair of ACE Governor at English Martyrs
- Notes:** Emily Gifford - PA
Apologies: Cllr Tony Jones
 Ashley Robson - Reading School

STANDING ITEMS

1.	Welcome and apologies
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new member Jon Gargan and Helen Redding Interim Head of SEN . Apologies were noted.
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2017
	The minutes for the meeting held on 13 th July were agreed.
3.	Matters arising from the minutes/School Forum and membership
	Chris Kiernan (CK) confirmed the consultation on the school improvement service and the de-delegated budget had finished. He stated that provisional details of underspend would be provided at the December meeting, with final confirmation presented at the January meeting. CK apologised for not sending the email containing details of how the allocation was being used and confirmed he would send post meeting. CK expressed that he was in discussions about the Sue Briggs post and would revert when he had further details. Further to schools forum’s vote for additional funding at Highdown, Rachel Cave (RC) explained that this decision had been overturned by the LA. RC stated she was taking advice from the EFSA and will update the group accordingly. Steven Davies (SD) explained that the growth fund expansion of 30 places for the next 5 years has been approved, but the 2 nd claim of additional pupil funding has been denied as funding is based on the October census and there are no exceptions for in year funding. This is the same for any school who loses or gains pupils in year - no funding will be taken away or added. This follows the ESFA schools funding operational guidance. A membership query, on the split of representation for primary and secondary schools, was raised. SD explained that representation was based on pupil numbers rather than by school .

	<p>The split was therefore between Primary maintained, Secondary maintained and Academies based with the places reserved for schools allocated in proportion to total pupil numbers in these three categories of school. The Chair verified that membership proposals would be brought to the December meeting to take account of recent shifts between these.</p>
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4.	<p>DSG budget monitoring 2017 - 18</p>
	<p>SD summarised the paper. He detailed his changes to Appendix 1 & 2 and welcomed comments on these changes by email.</p> <p>SD relayed there was still a significant overspend in the High Needs Block and, according to forecasting work on pupil places, this figure was set to rise. SD stated that overspend will be reported on at every forum meeting. Current forecast pressure of £3.9m.</p> <p>SD conveyed that there had been underspend in the Early Needs Block but the January census data will confirm the final numbers. There was a query over the LA paying the business rates of maintained nurseries and SD explained that the LA had decided against this but it would be looked at in 17-18. This is due to maintained Nursery schools being funded by the national early years funding formula and not the schools local formula.</p> <p>SD confirmed he would update the forum, at the December meeting, regarding the equal pay claims allocation as payments have started to be processed. The forum asked if the allocation has remaining funds after the equal pay claims have all been paid out, then what happens with the surplus? SD confirmed that the funding will come back to schools forum for discussion.</p> <p>SD stated that the LA was reviewing the funding process for permanently excluded pupils and more information will be sent via himself and Gill Dunlop. This is to make sure the funding process is updated for all schools who PEX R\ eading pupils.</p> <p>A query was raised on how the Support for Inclusion budget was split and which central salaries were taken from this figure; SD confirmed that the Early Years cluster was £150k, the Hard to Place was controlled by Gill Dunlop and the central staffing salaries had some posts that were under review. SD said he could provide more detail in Appendix 2 if required and welcomed guidance from the group.</p>
5.	<p>High needs report</p>
	<p>Helen Redding (HR) presented.</p> <p>HR summarised the paper and explained that the SEND strategy now in place would provide a framework to ensure continuity. She described how the working groups, especially Strand 1 data, would look to provide detail on the High Needs Block overspend, establish what needed to be done differently and give regular, open and transparent updates to the forum.</p> <p>HR talked through item 17 - 'Key issues' and item 18 - 'Next Steps'. She welcomed the groups views on what else should be looked at. The issues of double funding pupil places, the cost of transport for out of authority provision and the time spent in taxis was raised. HR agreed that these issues needed consideration and would be reported on at future meetings. There was discussion around the data showing empty pupil places (item 10.8.1) and HR reminded the group that this data was based on the January census but would be looked at.</p> <p>*Item 10.8.1: HR added that the figure under Thames Valley School should read 50.</p> <p>The Chair queried whether the closure of The Haven should be added to the 'Next Steps' and HR confirmed that although it was not used by many pupils, this was being discussed.</p> <p>Members of the forum praised the hard work that had gone into the report and thanked HR. Agreement was reached to progress with the 'Next Steps'.</p>

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6.	School funding consultation 2018-19
	<p>SD presented.</p> <p>SD gave a synopsis of the paper and outlined the changes introduced from the agreed national funding formula (item 4.2). SD discussed the consultation responses in Annex 1 and explained that he will be reviewing data and will present his findings at the forum in January. SD reminded the group that the funding figures would improve as the ones shown in the report were based on the October 16 census and we are expecting pupil growth in Reading for October 2017.</p> <p>SD drew attention to the recommendations, in item 6, due for vote by the forum. The Chair asked if the group were in agreement with the proposed planning and all agreed. It was suggested that schools were worse off under the mid-point budget compared to the national budget but SD explained that he had to show all the figures and although the LA will make the final decision, the forum will see 3 potential 18-19 budgets that will show the current local formula, the national formula and the LA recommended formula for transition. Forum will review the recommended formula.</p>
7.	Agenda items for future meeting
	<p>Members were reminded to let the Chair of RBC Officers know if there were any items they wanted included on the agenda for the December meeting.</p> <p>CK suggested that the growth fund should be added as a standing item and all agreed.</p> <p>The next meeting will be held 14th December 2017 at The Avenue Centre, Meadway Room.</p>
10.	Any other business
	There was none.