

Schools Forum Meeting Minutes - DRAFT - held on the 14th January 2016 at The Avenue

PRESENT

Peter Kayes	Governor, Redlands - CHAIR
Yvonne Jackson	Headteacher, Wilson Primary School
Charles Clare	Headteacher, Geoffrey Fields Junior
Lisa Bedlow	Headteacher, Caversham and Newbridge nurseries
Rachel Cave	Highdown
Joan Boyd	NUT
Cathy Doberska	Headteacher, New Christchurch
Julie Kempster	Riverside Day Nursery
Richard Rolf	Governor Micklands Primary
Isabelle Sandy	School Business Manager, Kendrick
Mark Hester	Cranbury College
Justine McMinn	Headteacher, EP Collier

RBC

Russell Dyer	Finance
Steven Davies	Finance
Chris Stephens	SEN
Austin McNamara	Interim, RBC
Dan Neal	RBC

APOLOGIES

Cllr Tony Jones	
Viv Angus	Headteacher, Reading Girls School
John Cosgrove	Headteacher, Christ the King (RC) School
Karen Hillier	Governor, Caversham and Newbridge nurseries
Eileen McElligott	Governor, English Martyrs
John Casey	Blessed Hugh Faringdon
Nicola Maytum	Headteacher, JMA
Joanne Harper	Principal, UTC
Sue Bourne	Headteacher, The Avenue
Mandy Hilton	Headteacher, Cranbury College

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- Welcome
- Apologies noted

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2015

- Correction for the minutes- Yvonne Jackson was present at the meeting on the 10th December but was not noted in the attendees; noted today
- Minutes of 10th December 2015 approved by Forum

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/ SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)

- In reference to Tindall report referenced at previous; AM asks the Schools Forum if it would welcome a refresh of this or a similar kind of exercise?
- Schools Forum's recommendation for this is to come back to a Schools Forum meeting with an outline of how this is to be done and the cost involved
- In relation to the discussion around the High Needs Block in SEN funding - AM advises on an update; one of the things that was to bring in an additional resource who could develop an action plan and drive this forward; this position has now been approved
- No membership issues

4. SCHOOLS FUNDING 2016/17 (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

Presented by RD

- This time of year the details of the schools budget is finalised (bulk of the work carried out by SD)
- This paper attempts to summarise the implications on the decisions and the funding implications
- This report is largely for noting and there are a couple of consultation matters in this paper
- An announcement made on the 17th December 2015 and SD has outlined the DSG allocations
- Early Years numbers get a refresh
- Education At Services Grant - this is to fund centrally retained services; in terms of this there has been a reduction in the allocation
- Overall DSG settlement itself; Issue regarding of free schools; one of the issues identified is the funding is not being covered for the growth of these schools in the next financial year; there is already a funding mechanism for Academy's however this is a change that has a significant impact on RBC and this was not anticipated
- This has also been picked up by other authorities however some are probably in a better position than RBC
- 3 options considered are: 1) Seek to reduce schools budget shares (this has been ruled out); 2) Set a deficit budget for next year in respect of the £1m (this would not be sustainable going forward and would not send the right message in respect of managing the DSG) 3) General Head Room available, this would take a large portion of this however reluctantly this looks like the strongest option to take however this will have a significant impact on how much of this will assist with the High Needs Block
- This is not just the education side that has been hit but the council in general
- Sought to protect individual school's as much as possible
- In previous years there was not an issue with this funding with Free Schools
- All schools get funded exactly the same but the monies go directly to the school
- During the 2015-16 year the Free Schools growth was covered by government however year 2016-17 it is expected that the council fund this
- Section 6 - outlines key financial decisions made at last meeting
- Schools Budget - when and what format

- Reported noted

5. WHITLEY EXCELLENCE CLUSTER: BUSINESS CASE FOR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Presented by CC

- There is a small group of children in Whitley who are at risk of permanent exclusion
- Working for a considerable length of time to plan for alternative provisions that would be run internally; instead of being set to a placement outside Reading
- The plan would be to have a central place in Whitley for the children to go
- The needs of the children will be assessed, will still remain on the role of the schools but will be educated in this central location or in one of the hubs in one of the other schools
- Figures suggest in the proposal outline considerable saving - bill to save exercise
- Positive for the schools that don't want to be permanently excluded and positive for the children
- Discussions with key personnel and this has been positive
- Need to identify a central space/hub for this; options been considered
- CS - from a strategic perspective is that it meets some key principals; to meet children's needs to meet them on a holistic level as well (forums, trying to encourage schools to seek help; meets the concerns of the parents)
- CS - consider funding this by bringing children back from very expensive outside of area placements? There are resources in each cluster and these are CAT teams; sees this as very positive for Reading principals
- AM - this has not been rejected at all and there are some strong principals in this proposal; also agrees around the bringing back the children who are currently placed out of area; Would want as many children as possible to benefit from mainstream
- DN - to look at this as a strategic whole (i.e. what happens next?)
- JM - confirms her school have spent 60 sessions on EP which has been positive for the children however is not sustainable financial
- CS - starting a pilot with 4 x year 1 students at Holybrook (part-time with a view after 2 terms can this child be integrated full-time)
- CC - case study of a child that had the intervention come in much earlier they would not be in the resource
- CS - from a strategic perspective a project is being talked through with 3 x Children Centres
- RR - suggestion for this to be Borough wide; Report on what all schools are spending on these sorts of issues; agrees that bringing the children back into the Borough would be positive
- The model would need to be transferrable
- **Action:** AM to reflect and consult on this matter at next meeting

6. EYSFF WORKING GROUP UPDATE & TIMETABLE

Presented by RD

- Summary for School's Forum

- Meeting held on the 6th January 2016 and outlined the issues discussed at this meeting
- Funding of Business Rates was discussed
- Rising 3's funding
- Deprivation funding and a range of options around this
- Include a question around High Needs and how this will be funded in the Early Years
- Group will meet before next Schools Forum and bring paper to the next meeting
- Paper noted

7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (STANDING ITEM)

- Reminder if an item needs to come to forum to contact RD, PK or SD

8. PROPOSED DATES/TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- The next Schools Forum is on the 17th March 2016 at 5.00pm

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - BID FOR SCHOOLS IN DIFFICULTY FUND

Chair change due to interest - CC Charing for this

- St Anne's - Special Measures
- PK - St Anne's inherited the debt over 2 years and whilst a school is in special measures it is difficult to cut costs;
- St Anne's is anticipating a balanced budget and is confident in future
- Asking for help with 1 off cost within special measures; to help minimise the deficit; this 1 off cost was not budgeted for - recruiting a Head of School (as a side note this has been difficult as the school is in measures); The Executive Head was managing 2 schools
- An agency member of staff was recruited but this was expensive - £30,000 more than budgeted for
- Couple items - local authority undertaken to help St Anne's
- One issue was 31 students in an infant class and the school was forced to put an extra teacher on due to that 1 extra child
- Also local authority have agreed to assist with the agency staff; Took strategic moves with the learning in specific years; Purchased phonics - £77,000.00 more than budgeted for
- Deficit will be paid back over time
- Recruiting next week for a deputy Head
- IS asks about pupil growth? PK explains that the school is normally over-subscribed; not all places offered were taken up due to special measures so there is not an issue with numbers
- AM advises that there is £50,000.00 of which Schools Forum agreed on last year to support schools in financial difficulty; there has been no call for this and the end of the tax year is in March
- PROPOSAL- School's Forum to agree that the contingency of £50,000.00 be allotted to St Anne's School
- VOTE: For = 9, Against = 0, Abstention = 0