

Minutes of Schools' Forum Meeting

January 16, 2020

Present

Jo Budge – Head Teacher of Blagdon/Caversham/New Bridge Nurseries, Justine McMinn – Head Teacher of E P Collier, Tonia Crossman – Head Teacher of Emmer Green, Peter Kayes – Governor at the Ridgeway (Chair), Richard Rolfe – Governor at Micklands, Karen Edwards – Head Teacher of The Heights, Richard Pearse – Head Teacher of Churchend School, Isabelle Sandy – Business Manager of Kendrick, Claire Brown – Business Manager of Prospect, Annal Nayyar – Finance Director of Bayliss Trust (Reading Girls), Marie Belcher – Finance Director of Reading School, Mark Hester – Business Manager of Cranbury College, Ali McNamara – NEU.

Apologies

Robert Howell – Head Teacher of Alfred Sutton, Cathy Doberska – Head Teacher of English Martyrs, Simon Utley – Head Teacher of Blessed Hugh Faringdon, Stieve Butler – Head Teacher of Meadow Park, Rachel Cave – Head Teacher of Highdown, Symon Cooke - Head Teacher of The Avenue, Lee Smith – Head Teacher of Holy Brook, Ita McGullion – Manager of Kennet Day Nursery, Kate Reynolds – Director of Education, Steven Davies – Strategic Business Partner.

In attendance

Cllr Ashley Pearce – Lead Member for Education, Claire White – Interim Education & Schools Business Partner, Deborah Hunter – Head of SEND, Deborah Glassbrook – Director of Children's Services, Clare Warren – School Support Lead/Minute Taker.

#	Item	Notes
1	Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.
2	Minutes of the meeting held on December 5, 2019	Minutes were agreed from 5 th December Matters arising: - Kate Reynolds to follow up on maintained primary head representative and non-school post-16 representative

3	<p>Schools' Forum Membership Update – confirmation of representation</p>	<p>There have been 2 resignations – a nursery governor and an academy primary head as well as the remaining two vacancies of maintained primary head and non-school post 16 provision.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Claire White to contact academy primary heads to seek representative</p> <p>Peter Kayes will discuss nursery governor representative with Jo Budge</p>
4	<p>DSG Budget Monitoring 2019/20 Month 9</p>	<p>Claire White presented.</p> <p>The report contains the current position for month 9 2019/20 (December 2019).</p> <p>There have not been many changes since the last report (at end of November 2019) and the actual DSG allocation has not changed. Are only expecting an adjustment on the recoupment funding of High Needs due to the academisation of Phoenix College on 1st January 2020 and the anticipated academisation of Cranbury College – due 1st February 2020.</p> <p>Early Years funding will change as a result of today's census.</p> <p>Table 2 shows the deficit has gone up to just over £3m, this is over budget by £1.4m. 4.3 summarises the main reasons for this variance. The main changes since last month are a reduction in the Early Years contingency of £300k as a result of Autumn term payments, and High Needs top up funding rising by £70k.</p> <p>The remaining Early Years contingency may be required for the Spring payments based on January census numbers. If the contingency left over at the end of the financial year is significant, a one-off payment can be made to providers and it will not be used to offset the high needs block deficit.</p> <p>Point 5.5 shows that the number of EHCPs has gone up to 1,394 compared to a budget of 1,292 resulting in the £1.1m overspend in top up payments.</p> <p>There is also a £30k overspend on NHS contracts as the original contract did not include all academies, and a possible £40k overspend on inclusion funding for mainstream schools with a high percentage of pupils with EHCPs.</p> <p>The original deficit recovery plan submitted to the ESFA had been satisfactory as all details had been provided and had recovered the deficit within 4 years, so they did not offer a</p>

		<p>support meeting. However due to the plan changing, a meeting has been arranged with them for the end of March.</p> <p>Previous plans were offset by Early Years contingency. The deficit is now back up to £3.3m for 19/20 as shown in Table 6. It is a more realistic position with any Early Years contingency no longer offsetting the deficit.</p> <p>The current deficit recovery plan is based on existing spend plus continual year on year increases in numbers of EHCPs, and takes into account likely funding levels. So could still be a balanced budget with repayment by 22/23. This is very simplistic and requires lots of detailed work and confirmation from DfE as to future High Needs funding.</p> <p>The report was noted along with the current position and pressures.</p>
5	<p>DSG Allocations for 2020/21</p>	<p>Claire White presented.</p> <p>This report sets out the allocations for each DSG funding block following confirmation from DfE on 19th December 2019.</p> <p>Detailed calculations are shown in Appendix 1. Overall DSG is up £8m, which is 6.53% increase.</p> <p><u>Schools Block</u> This is up £6m, with £2m due to changes in pupil numbers and £4m being an increase in funding per pupil.</p> <p><u>Central Schools Services Block</u> This has gone down to £1.2m, -8.42% due to reduction in historic commitments. The DfE are looking to reduce these commitments so that all Local Authorities are funded equally. These historic commitments have been reduced by 20% this year, but there is no information regarding future year reductions.</p> <p><u>High Needs Block</u> There is no change to the High Needs funding formula. As Reading is on the funding floor it got an increase of £2m. Most of this has been confirmed with the exception of the import/export adjustment which is a deduction of £1.9m but is not expected to significantly change.</p> <p><u>Early Years Block</u> Overall an increase of £188k, +1.52% based on the January 2019 census, with hourly funding rates for 2, 3 and 4-year olds increase by 8p. This will be updated based on the January 2020 census. The lump sum for maintained nurseries will continue to the end of the 20/21 financial year.</p>

Teachers pay and pension grants will continue as separate funding streams for 20/21 but there has been no other information with regards to other funding such as Pupil Premium. It is expected that these will be announced soon.

Central Schools Services Block

Appendix 2 shows the proposals for the Central Schools Services block. Historical commitments have been reduced whilst other lines of expenditure have been capped at the existing amounts as shown in Table 1 on page 30. This has to be approved by Schools Forum line by line.

High Needs Block

The DfE anticipated that extra funding in the High Needs block would be used to reduce the deficit. However this is unlikely in 20/21. It is proposed that part of the increase would be used to ensure that special schools and resource units funded from this block would get inflationary increases. Top up bands will also be reviewed. All changes are to be implemented from September 2020. Central budgets from High Needs funding block are not expected to increase.

Further work will be done on this and brought to the next Schools Forum meeting.

A question was raised with regards to the Teacher Pay Grant which will remain a separate grant in 20/21 at the same rates as previously. This is also the case for the Teachers Pension Grant. If Teachers Pay increases above 2% then it may be funded but this is unknown at this stage. Claire White will send out an email to clarify.

There is no information with regards to 21/22 as to whether it will remain a separate grant or become part of the school formula.

A question was raised whether given the reductions in the budget (in the Central Schools Services Block) what will be the impact. It was confirmed that services will carry on and funding may be found elsewhere for some services, and Steve Davies is leading on this.

VOTE: To accept the Local Authority recommendation for the Central Schools Services Block – 11 votes for, 0 against/abstention

Recommendation agreed.

Action:

		<p>Claire White will send out an email to clarify Teachers Pay and Pension Grants 20/21</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Final School Formula 2020/21</p>	<p>Claire White presented.</p> <p>The Schools Block has now been confirmed as well as pupil numbers and other factors per school. Table 1 sets out the actual School Block allocation. There are adjustments for a small number of schools with higher business rates to be met from the 2020/21 allocation (£10k), the growth fund and the agreed £350k transfer to the High Needs block.</p> <p>The Schools Forum have previously looked at how to allocate the Schools Block and wanted to keep to the NFF factors and rates. Consultation has been carried out to determine the allocation of any additional funding through the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) as not all factors could be funded at NFF rates including the ACA. As the schools block allocation is higher than originally anticipated then all factors can be increased to mirror the NFF with 7% increase except the lump sum which has been increased by 1.9%.</p> <p>Primary AWPU was previously benefitting from the ACA so has increased by 4% although this is still lower than 2017/18 and 3 schools are still in receipt of MFG.</p> <p>Appendix 1 shows how each of the formula factor values have changed since 2017/18, with primary basic entitlement (AWPU) in 2017/18 being £3,131, and now at £2,954 per pupil.</p> <p>The main reason for the additional Schools Block funding is due to the growth in secondary pupil numbers funded at the Secondary Unit of Funding which is higher than KS3 allocations (where the growth is occurring) through the formula.</p> <p>Appendix 2 on page 42 shows the final allocations to schools. Academy final allocations may vary slightly due to MFG which should be confirmed in March.</p> <p>Primary schools receive an average increase of 4% and secondary schools receive an average increase of 6%, with only 3 still receiving MFG being Alfred Sutton, Katesgrove and Micklands. This means they are still receiving protection for changes versus the old School Formula from 2017/18.</p>

		<p>Some school decreases are due to reductions in pupil numbers such as a loss of a bulge class but costs, in theory, should also have decreased.</p> <p>As the Schools Block formula is virtually at NFF with few on MFG then this should give certainty to schools moving forward that there are unlikely to be no reductions moving forward. The DfE has promised further funding increases but no details have been provided.</p> <p>The report was noted</p>
7	De-delegations 2020/21	<p>Claire White presented.</p> <p>This is for maintained schools to vote.</p> <p>This relates to the services that maintained schools can opt to receive by a top slice to their budget and will apply to all the maintained schools rather than individual schools.</p> <p>The proposals are for the services to remain the same as 2019/20 being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Support • School Improvement • Union Duties • General Duties <p>These are charged on a per pupil basis as shown in Table 1.</p> <p>Appendix 3 on page 53 shows the impact per school.</p> <p>VOTE: To accept the Local Authority recommendation for the maintained primary school de-delegations</p> <p>Behaviour Support – 4 votes for, 0 against/abstention</p> <p>School Improvement – 4 votes for, 0 against/abstention</p> <p>Union Duties – 4 votes for, 0 against/abstention</p> <p>General Duties – 4 votes for, 0 against/abstention</p> <p>Recommendation agreed for maintained primary schools.</p> <p>Post meeting Note:</p> <p>As there was no representative from the maintained secondary school present, Claire contacted Blessed Hugh Farringdon by email for their vote.</p> <p>School Improvement – agreed</p> <p>General Duties - agreed</p>

8.	SEND Update	<p>Deborah Hunter presented.</p> <p>Recruitment taking place tomorrow for further position on the SEND team. This will help with communication and timeliness.</p> <p>Visit took place to the Mulberry Bush School. Whilst Therapeutic Thinking is going well there are few pupils 'in crisis'. This visit was to look at their outreach service model and how it fits with mental health support and Therapeutic Thinking. There will be a report back to the next Schools Forum.</p> <p>An application has been made for a second mental health team and should hear by the end of March.</p> <p>The team are working on 2 strands – early intervention to specialist provision and a partnership approach to mental health with OneReading. They want to do more work on children not in education e.g. due to permanent exclusion or on part-time timetables. A questionnaire is being sent to schools for information on this population, especially if parents have been advised by doctors to keep the child at home due to anxiety. This tends to be relatively small but begins in late primary and then they quickly drop out of secondary schools. At this stage only numbers are sought.</p> <p>Need help to flag pupils with pending EHCP or move into the authority with High Needs that need a lot of support.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
9.	Agenda Items For Next Meeting	<p>The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2020 at the Civic Centre – Mayors Parlour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final DSG budget proposals for 2020/21 (inc update on EHCP bandings, inclusion funding criteria, deficit recovery plan) • SEND strategy update • DSG Budget monitoring 2019/20 month 11 • Agree Schools' Forum meeting dates for 2020/21
10.	Any Other Business	<p>Cllr Ashley Pearce mentioned that the Forum for Clean Air Safer Transport which would include school streets were meeting next week in the Council Chamber. They are looking for pilot schools to try and stop parents parking outside the school. If any school is interested, please contact Cllr Pearce.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 17:50</p>