

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 15 July 2015 at 4.30 pm in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

David Jeapes, Head Teacher	Secondary
Jackie Collins, Head Teacher	Primary
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher	Primary
James Humphries	Secondary academy representative
Steven Labedz	Secondary academy representative
Steven Sheehan, Governor	Primary

17. Apologies

Apologies were received from Carole Damper, Margaret Dunford Councillor Ken Ferrett, Colin Galloway Clive Good, Gareth Hughes Bruce Marr, Lee Miller, Councillor Lynne Stagg and Karen Stocks.

18. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Richard Webb noted that he was still waiting for declaration of interests forms from a number of members.

19. Membership changes.

There had been no changes to the membership.

20. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting on 25 February 2015.

The Schools Forum agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015.

21. Introduction from the Chair.

The Chair informed members that the meeting was not quorate and therefore the forum would not be able to take decisions.

Richard Webb said that in accordance with the Schools Forum constitution, he would review the membership of members who have not attended three consecutive meetings.

The Chair welcomed everyone to his first meeting as Chair and referred to the letter he had sent to members setting out his aims and objectives. He added that he was pleased that members had agreed in a recent email exchange to set the dates of their head and governing body meetings so that they can feed into to the Schools Forum.

22. DSG outturn position 2014-15 and revised budget 2015-16.

Richard Webb, Finance Manager introduced the report.

In response to questions, Catherine Kickham, Early Support Commissioning Manager, Julia Katherine Inclusion Commissioning Manager and Richard Webb clarified the following points:

- SEN provision for year R and pre-school is currently being reviewed to enable future need to be predicted more accurately.
- Working parents in certain income brackets are eligible for two year old placements. According to the January census, 64% have taken up their places. The aim is to increase this to 90%. Portsmouth is ranked 8th out of 19 local authorities in the South East for take-up. Plymouth has the highest take-up: 81%.
- Evidence shows that the higher the qualification of the lead at the childcare centre the better the outcomes for the children.
- The government has not yet provided detailed guidance on the provision for 3-4 year olds which is due to increase from 15 to 30 hours a week.
- The Department for Education issued a Call for Evidence in relation to the cost of providing childcare that closes in August 2015.

The Chair reported that their nursery manager said that a move from 15 to 30 hours for 3-4 year olds has meant that there are fewer places available.

Actions

- The Chair will contact Carole Damper, the early years' provider to request that she seek feedback from her peers on this new initiative for 3-4 year olds.
- Details of the mechanisms for utilising the carry-forward balance be brought to the Schools Forum meeting in October 2015.

The Schools Forum

- 1. Noted the year-end outturn budget position to the DSG at the end of March 2015 and the variance explanations contained within this report.**
 - 2. Endorsed the revised budget for 2015/16 as set out in appendix 1.**
- 23. Maintained school balances as at 31 March 2015.**
- The Chair commented although a number of schools are sitting on hefty balances, he had every confidence that head teachers have plans for them. The Chair also highlighted that the balances of academies are not included within the report.

Richard Webb introduced the report and added that the Cabinet Member for Children & Education considered this report at his meeting yesterday and had expressed concern about the some of the surplus balances. Subsequently he had instructed the Director of Children's Services to communicate with those schools with balances in excess of 20%.

Di Smith, Director of Children's Services clarified that she will seek assurance that the funding is being used effectively to ensure the attainment of current pupils. She added there is a risk that as some schools carry-forward large balances, it might be perceived that all schools do not need as much funding in future.

Sue Wilson reminded the Forum that schools had been contacted before and there was no noticeable difference in balances.

The Chair was mindful that the circumstances of each school are different and high balances might be temporary.

Actions

1. Schools Forum members report back to their head teacher colleagues regarding the concern over the level of balances.
2. Schools that had high balances for a number of years be identified and inform the communication by the Director of Children's Services.

The Schools Forum noted the level of schools' revenue balances and capital balances as at 31 March 2015 as shown in appendices 2 & 3.

24. Childcare Sufficiency

Catherine Kickham introduced the report and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The £51,000 referred to within the report originated from trajectory funding.
- There is no one area in the city where take-up is low.
- At the 12 month development check the Health Visitor can identify eligible parents and signpost them to the service.
- Some BME parents do not see the relevance of the 2 year old provision, but when the benefits to their children are explained to them, most take it up.

The Schools Forum

1. **Noted the progress in expanding the sufficiency of two-year old places.**
2. **Noted the request for the allocation of £51,000 from the 2014-15 carry forward to be used to continue the expansion of the two year old provision in the city.**

25. School term dates.

Mike Stoneman introduced this report and pointed out the following error in the report:

Page 42 section 5.1 - the headings should read 2016 not 2015.

The Chair informed members that there had been a huge take up of the two week summer school offered to year 1 pupils at Mayfield School. The aim is to target pupils who would benefit the most. Staff do this on a voluntary basis and are given two weeks off in term time.

Sue Wilson explained that her school had asked parents for their views on a possible small change to term dates. The overwhelming response was that they would be happy for that but wanted all schools in the area (including outside Portsmouth) to have the same dates.

The Schools Forum noted the content of the report and feedback to their representative groups, encouraging the continuation of the current process for setting school term times.

26. School funding arrangements 2016-17.

Richard Webb advised members that as yet there was no guidance from the Department for Education regarding the funding formula changes for 2016-17. Officers are however, preparing the base data in preparation for the announcement by the DfE. He will inform members by email if there are any urgent updates.

Alison Egerton explained that there will be two working groups: a joint primary and secondary one and a special one. There are currently vacancies for a special head teacher, a secondary governor and a primary finance officer. Three meetings will be held; a joint one on 17 July at 3pm and then two separate meetings in early September. Feedback from these meetings will be reported to the Schools Forum in October.

The meeting concluded at 5.50pm.

David Jeapes
Chair