

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM



Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17th November 2011

In Laurence House

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 8)

✓ = present ✗ = absent

		Attendance
Primary School Headteachers		
Irene Cleaver	Athelney	✓
Steve Davies	Coopers Lane	Apologies
Liz Booth	Dalmain	✓
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	✗
Vacancy		
Nursery School Headteacher		
Nikki Oldhams	Chelwood	✓
Secondary School Headteachers		
Anne Potter	Addey & Stanhope	✓
Bob Ellis	Conisborough College	✓
Erica Pienaar (Chair)	Prendergast	✓
Vacancy		
Special School Headteacher		
Tim Stokes (observer)	Prendragon	✗
Vacancy		
Primary & Primary Special School Governors		
Keith D'Wan	Athelney	✗
Brian Lymbery (Vice-Chair)	Lucas Vale	✓
Vacancy		
Secondary & Secondary Special School Governors		
Vacancy		
Nick Day	Sydenham	Apologies
Academies		
Declan Jones	Haberdashers' Aske's	Apologies
14-19 Consortium Rep		
Dympna Lennon	Addey & Stanhope	✓
Early Years Rep		
Val Pope	Pre School Alliance	✗
Diocesan Authorities		
Rev Richard Peers	Southwark of Diocesan Board of Education	✗
Michael Cullinane	Archdiocese of Southwark Schools Commission	✗

Observers	
Chris Threfall	Head of Educational Development
Alan Docksey	Head of Resources
Kim Knappett	ALT (standing in for Martin Powell-Davies NUT)
Also Present	
Dave Richards	CYP Group Finance Manager
Christine Grice	Head of Access and Support Services
John Russell	Head of Pupil Services
Jon Sharpe	Standing in for Tim Stokes
David Austin	Interim Head of Audit & Risk
Denise Castle	Clerk

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Frankie Sulke, Steve Davies, Nick Day and Declan Jones

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 21st September 2011.

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

2. Matters Arising

Absence report by School

Alan Docksey agreed to remind Diane Parkhouse to provide the report on schools' average absence data to all schools.

The number of vacancies on the Forum were noted and officers asked to follow this up.

Consultation on Education Capital (James Review)

Chris Threfall confirmed Lewisham's response has been submitted.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Forum members elected Erica Pienaar as Chair, and Brian Lymberry as Vice-Chair to Schools Forum.

4. Audit Update

David Austin presented the annual review of schools internal audit. The report provided Forum with an overview of the findings and recommendations from the internal audit work undertaken in the last year. Forum were asked to note the update and the continued progress being made within schools to enhance internal control.

The overall assurance opinions continue to improve, however there continues to be recommendations in respect of inventory management and purchasing controls. Where control weaknesses are identified they highlight matters of compliance with established procedures rather than concerns about the fundamental control framework in place. Vigilance around compliance with established policies and procedures should therefore suffice to limit the number of seriousness of audit recommendations raised in future.

Alan Dockey confirmed that any outstanding recommendations raised by Audit are followed up by the LA as the results feature in the overall LA report.

It was recognised that schools may have implemented the recommendations but not actually reported that they had done so. Evidence needs to be sent to the internal audit section to confirm their implementation of recommendations.

Alan Docksey confirmed schools with limited assurance are offered support to help address issues identified through the audit.

5. Local Funding Formula review 12/13

Hayden Judd presented the report to consult Forum on proposed changes to Lewisham's ISB formula and facilitate discussion regarding whether it is appropriate to provide additional funding to schools with high levels of Statemented pupils.

AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit)

Forum agreed the proposal to simplify the AWPU which moves all elements to a calculation method using a per pupil rate. The allocation will be more predictable as it will be solely dependent upon each school's pupil numbers.

Decision : Agreed

Secondary AEN Calculation

Allocation	Data	% Of Total AEN Allocation	Total AEN Allocation
Social Deprivation	FSM	57%	£ 5,796,210
Prior Attainment	Band 3 At PST	36%	£ 3,700,364
Mobility	Casual Joiners	2%	£ 188,504
Mobility	Casual Leavers	0%	£ 44,863
Mobility	3 Or More Schools In Phase	0%	£ 22,840
EAL	Category A	3%	£ 261,413
EAL	Category B	1%	£ 148,997
EAL	Category C	1%	£ 51,590
		100%	£10,214,781

Three categories of EAL are funded each relating to a length of exposure to English for pupils from non-English speaking countries

Category A is 0-18 months exposure

Category B is 18 months to 5 years exposure

Category C is 5 to 10 years exposure

Forum agreed to merging EAL category C into B. Hayden Judd asked Forum to note that all categories are triggered by the same pupils, the difference being just the length of exposure. So moving the funding into just Category A just changes when the funding is received; it increases the amount of funding when the child arrives at the expense of later periods.

Hayden Judd asked for Forum views on mobility definitions as shown in Appendix 1 and Forum agreed that investigation of alternative definitions should be undertaken.

Decision : Agreed

High Numbers of Statemented Pupils

Dave Richards reported that officers had been asked to look at the possibility of providing additional funding to schools with high levels of Statemented pupils. It was suggested that they may be other costs associated with provision over and above that a school may need, or a particular year group may require additional funding. Funding for pupils under matrix level 6 is distributed direct to collaboratives.

Forum agreed a working group should be set up to look at the issue and report back with recommendations. Dave Richards will co-ordinate the meeting with Anne Potter, Liz Booth and Denise Watts

Action : Dave Richards to set up Working group

6. National Post 16 Funding Consultation

Dave Richards presented the report. The Department for Education (DfE) and the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA) have issued a consultation document on the operation of the national funding formula for 16 – 19 years olds.

The current funding formula operates across maintained schools and Academy sixth forms, colleges and other providers to ensure a consistent basis for funding. The government believe it has two significant weaknesses. First, the funding formula is not always transparent and straightforward and secondly that the arrangements encourage providers to run courses for financial returns rather than the needs of the market.

There are themes and arguments that are consistent with our responses to the DSG funding formula that need to be brought into this consultation. The officers involved in the working group will enable this to happen.

The Lewisham post-16 Policy and Programme Steering Group met to discuss the consultation on the 8th November 2011. The intention is to set up a sub-working group to review the consultation document.

The Forum noted the working group that had been set up. Forum agreed to note the report and to agree that the Chair of the Working Group should concur the final response with the Chair of the School Forum.

Decision : Agreed

7. Budget Monitoring

Dave Richards presented the budget monitoring report to consider the latest forecast position for 2011/12.

The Dedicated School Grant has increased by £500k due to the increase for pupil premium.

Special Educational Needs

Dave Richards reported that there has been a significant change in the budget monitoring position during the last month, due to an increased pressure on the independent special schools fees budget. The forecast overspend has increased by £400k to £871k.

Christine Grice reported that the LA will be carrying out an audit of all new cases in order to better understand emerging pressures and trends. There is a particular problem with post 16 provision and more work needs to be done for the transition to post 17. It was also reported that some parents do not support their local offer and to uphold the LA decision, the Partnership must support the offer. If the LA loses appeals it is very costly.

Alan Docksey has requested that SEN look at possible tribunal cases; ascertain the level of cost; and look at the worst case scenario for levels of expenditure.

The overspend causes an immediate problem with the budget, although this will be covered by immediate management action (£248k) with the balance being funded by the contingency for this year. This contingency has been provided out of funding that is either one off or is not likely to be available beyond 2012/13.

Dave Richards reported that while the Dedicated Schools Grant will balance at the end of the year, it hides the real concern that longer term funding pressures are building up and there is a clear need to address these.

8. National Audit Office report on School Financial management and the s251 benchmarking data (budget 2011/12)

Dave Richards presented report to consider the National Audit Office report on school financial management.

The report highlights the desire of central government to ease the burdens on schools but at the same time open up the scrutiny of financial affairs to parents and the public in the belief this will drive improvements in financial management and performance.

The report highlighted that some 27% of local authorities responding to the survey stated that only a minority of their primary schools had governing bodies with sufficient financial expertise.

Brian Lymberry raised his concerns over poor attendance at the Governors Induction Training course held in November. 16 people had registered by only 5 Governors attended. Chair confirmed it was difficult to influence people to attend training.

Forum agreed that it was a concern that some Governing Bodies do not have Governors with the appropriate skills base.

Chris Threfall agreed to report concerns raised at Forum to Sue Tipler to see if any issues can be addressed via Governor Services:-

- How can the calibre of Governors be improved
- Can a time limit be set for being a Governor
- How do you get a good pool of skills that are essential for a Governing body
- How do you deal with Governors no longer being suitable for role
- Governors should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and what is expected of them

The question remains on how we build on this report and, in particular the gap the report identifies on primary school governors. It is proposed that :-

- The current monthly finance newsletter provides schools with the latest events in the financial world affecting schools. It is intended to use this in the future to nudge schools in the direction of the tasks they should be performing each month.
- A finance section appears in the governors termly newsletter and this will detail in the future the tasks that each governing body should be considering every month and the type of challenges they should be posing to the school staff on the budget
- A workshop will be provided for school bursars in the new year to assist them in calculating and planning their budget
- The governors training session next term will be focused on the financial challenges that governors need to provide.
- The in-house benchmarking data and value for money graphs will be produced in December to aid the budget decisions made by schools.

9. Next calendar year work plan

Dave Richards presented the dates for future meetings and a work plan. This was agreed.

10. Any other business

Date of next meeting Thursday 12th January 2012 – 2.30 to 4.30

SCHOOL FORUM ACTION SUMMARY – from School Forum held on 17th November 2011

ITEM	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	OFFICER(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	OUTCOME / CURRENT POSITION
2	Schools' average absence data to all schools	Alan Docksey	
2	School Forum vacancies to be filled	Alan Docksey	
5	Working Group to be set up for funding schools with high numbers of Statemented pupils	Dave Richards	Arranged for 7 th December 2011
8	Chris Threfall to speak to Sue Tipler regarding Governors	Chris Threfall/ Sue Tipler	

SCHOOL FORUM ACTION SUMMARY – from School Forum held on 14th July 2011

ITEM	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	OFFICER(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	OUTCOME / CURRENT POSITION
3	Inform Forum of members on the Therapies Implementation Group Provide details of costs for therapies	Anne Finn	
8	Impact of Single Status for Special Schools	Dave Richards	To be considered with the Budget Setting process