

**SOUTHAMPTON SCHOOLS' FORUM
NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 6th MARCH 2012
AT THE CEDAR SCHOOL**

Present:

Primary School

David Turner	-	Governor
Liz Filer	-	Headteacher
Peter Howard	-	Headteacher
Mark Sheehan	-	Headteacher
Julie Swanston	-	Headteacher
Colin Warburg	-	Governor

Secondary Schools

Ruth Evans	-	Headteacher
Karen Dagwell	-	Headteacher
Richard Harris		Governor (Chair)

Academy

Ian Golding	-	Principal
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Special

Jonathan Howells	-	Headteacher
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Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Jane Smith

Nursery

Karen Stacey	-	Headteacher
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Non Schools

Peter Sopowski	-	NUT Secretary
Anna Wright	-	PVI for Early Years
Councillor Keogh	-	Council Representative

Observers

Cllr Turner	-	Swaythling Ward Councillor
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Also in attendance:

Councillor Bogle	-	Cabinet Member, Children's Services and Learning
Alison Alexander	-	Children's Services and Learning
Lynn Franklin	-	Children's Services and Learning
Chris Tombs	-	Children's Services and Learning
Julie Wharton	-	Children's Services and Learning
Sharon Pearson	-	Democratic Services

1. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

Apologies were received from Beverley Murtagh and Sue Thompson

The Chair welcomed Jane Smith, Headteacher of the Pupil Referral Unit as a new Schools Forum Member.

Members passed a vote of thanks to Jonathan Howells who had very kindly provided the venue and refreshments for the meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 24th April 2013 and Mark Sheehan, Mansbridge Primary School, very kindly agreed to host the meeting.

2. **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January were approved as a correct record.

3. **ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROVISION**

The Forum considered the briefing paper of the Principal Accountant for Schools, outlining the Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) and the changes proposed. Jane Smith, Headteacher of the Pupil Referral Unit was present to answer questions and provide additional information on the proposed Alternative Learning Provision to be offered.

A discussion ensued and the following was noted:-

- the PRU would be receiving a delegated budget in 2013-14 funded from the High Needs Block and payments from schools ; in line with DfE regulations the PRU would be funded for 160 places with each place attracting a base level of funding of £8,000 from the High Needs Block and top-up funding per pupil paid by the commissioner of the place (either the local authority or a school) on the basis of three place types;
- all Alternative Learning Provision would relocate to the Compass School from September 2013;
- if a pupil was permanently excluded the school would lose the per pupil and Pupil Premium funding for that child;
- the top-up charges for schools placing pupils at the Compass School were very reasonable to attract people to utilise this resource and the service would be reviewed each year to ensure that a high quality service was maintained;
- the PRU would be working with City Colleges; and
- there might be some flexibility with numbers due to the fact that Alternative Learning Provision was worked around 9 week blocks.

RESOLVED that:-

- i. the Schools Forum noted the proposed provision and pricing for Alternative Learning Provision; and

- ii. an updated report would be tabled at the end of the year (March 2014), providing details on how the new Alternative Learning Provision was working and would include transportation costs.

4. **PUPILS WITH STATEMENTS**

The Forum considered the briefing paper of the Finance Manager for Children's Services and Learning for the Forum to recommend a preferred option for allocations to schools from the Pupils with Statements budget in the High Needs Block for 2013/14.

The following was noted:-

- that as a result of new legislation and personalisation of care plans, Education, Health and Care Plans would replace statements; this would become legislation in 2014 and would change the way that statements were processed and managed; and
- the DfE regulations in terms of funding for pupils with statements did not encourage inclusion.

RESOLVED :-

- i. that Option 2 (slightly amended) be recommended – schools pay for the first 12 hours of LSA support (£6,000 per pupil) with the balance allocated on the basis of the SEN low attainment factor which would provide more flexibility to support schools where needed with the option of a small contingency of approximately £100,000 to be held to fund any exceptional circumstances;
- ii. that a report be tabled at year end (March 2014) to provide information on how the above model was working; and
- iii. that the Chair write to the DfE on behalf of the Forum, making them aware that the current DfE model did not encourage inclusion and the perception was that it created an incentive to exclude statemented pupils.

5. **PROVISIONAL UNDERSPEND OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2012/13**

The Forum considered the briefing paper of the Finance Manager for Children's Services and Learning, outlining the forecast level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that would remain unspent at the end of the 2012/13 financial year and requesting the Forum's view on the planned uses for the underspend.

A discussion ensued and the following was noted:-

- there was a forecast underspend of £865,515 in the 3 and 4 year old nursery budget mainly due to the growth in numbers not being as high as forecast;
- it was proposed that £800,000 of the underspend be carried forward to 2013/14 as follows:-
 - £600,000 to Infant and Junior Schools merging into Primary Schools to fund the costs of capital work required;
 - £200,000 to fund any liabilities arising from conversion of sponsored academies;
- the Forum expressed concern about the proposed allocation of money to

- Infant and Junior Schools merging into Primary Schools;
- when schools merge the Schools Budget saves an amount of up to £114,000 lump sum payment per new primary school less any protection from the Minimum Funding Guarantee or any relevant split site allowance;
- the local authority is responsible for the deficits of sponsored academies;
- the money could not be utilised to protect Sure Start Centres under the regulations.
- there was a perception that there were not enough 3-4 year old places; and
- that any remaining balance should be allocated as a one-off payment to offset the PFI deductions made to school budget shares.

RESOLVED:-

The Forum recommended:

- i. that £200,000 be earmarked to fund any liabilities from the conversion of sponsored academies;
- ii. that £600,000 was too high a figure to allocate to merging primary schools and officers should report back to the Forum with details of the actual allocations made;
- iii. that officers report back to the Forum on the take up of 3-4 year old places; and
- iv. that officers investigate the possibility that any remaining balance be allocated as a one-off payment to offset the PFI deductions made to school budget shares.

6. **FINANCIAL BENCHMARKING INFORMATION 2012/13**

The Forum received and noted the briefing paper of the Principal Accountant for Schools, providing financial benchmarking information issued by the DfE based on the 2012/13 Section 251 Budget statement returns.

The following was noted:-

- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – Southampton was 6th best funded.
- Individual Schools Budget (ISB)– schools contributed less to central services than other comparable authorities.
- Contingencies – there was a reduction in centrally held budgets as most authorities had delegated more contingency budgets to schools.
- Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) – Southampton was in line or lower than national averages for Primary and Secondary Schools receiving the MFG rather than the Fair Funding Formula.