

Meeting of the Schools Forum

Tuesday 12th May 2009

(4.00 pm, Training Room 2, Building 2 at NLBP)

Attended

Members:

Alan Homes (NASUWT)
 Angela Murphy (14-19 Partnership, Head Bishop Douglas)
 Anthony Vourou (Governor, St John's N11)
 Dee Oelman (Head, St Mary's & St John's)
 Derrick Brown (Governor, Ashmole)
 Elizabeth Pearson (Governor, Livingstone)
 Gilbert Knight (Governor, Oakleigh)
 Helen Schmitz (Head, Cromer Road)
 Jayne Franklin (Head, Childs Hill)
 Jo Djora (Head, Coppetts Wood)
 Jodi Gurney (Head, Hampden Way)
 John Marincowitz (Head, QE Boys)
 Johnathan Hewlings (Governor, East Barnet)
 Kate Webster (Head QE Girls)
 Ken Huggins (Governor, The Compton)
 Kevin Hoare (Head, Finchley Catholic)
 Mick Quigley (Principal Inspector, Children's Service)
 Sarah Vipond (Early Years Working Group)
 Stephen Parkin (Governor, St Mary's High)
 Tim Bowden (Head, Holy Trinity)

LA Officers:

Carol Beckman (School Funding Manager)
 Denise Murray (Strategic Finance Manager)
 Graham Durham (Assistant Director, Inclusion)
 Linda Parker (Strategic Finance Manager)
 Val White (Assistant Director,)
 Sheila Abbott (Extended Services Remodelling Manager)
 Stav Yiannou (BRSI Divisional Manager)
 Ieuan Renowden (Special Projects Consultant)
 Tony Lampert (HR Manager)

Consultant: Geoff Boyd (Consultant)

Observer Status: Lucy Salaman (LSC Partnership Manager)

Clerk: Sarrosh Malik (School Resources & Support Officer)

Not Present

Members:

Anthea Aberly (Head, Rosh Pinah)
 Gary Tucker (Head, Christ's College Finchley)
 Hazel Godfrey (Governor, Broadfields)
 Jeanette Adak (Head, Monkfrith)
 Lynda Walker (Head, Oak Lodge)

LA Officers: Martin Baker (Acting Director of Children's Service)

Observers: Cllr Fiona Bulmer
Angela Trigg (London Academy)

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Anthea Aberly, Cllr Bulmer, Martin Baker and Lynda Walker.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (10th February 2009)

Proposer: JH
Seconder: AH

3. Matters Arising (On Agenda)

- 3.1 Minute 4.2.1 –Pupil Number Projections
JM questioned whether the pupil numbers were accurate. AH said that there was a very small percentage change, 20-35 children amongst 20,000. JH said the question last meeting was more longer term than just around the budget cycle, looking ahead to regeneration and the number of residents increasing. CB explained that the council makes these projections, but the 'child yield' is difficult to estimate accurately. AH said that the economic downturn may have an impact on demand for provision. The numbers staying on in 6th forms may have a greater impact on SEN provision.
- 3.2 Minute 4.2.1 – SEN Benchmarking Data
The SEN Choice Strategy, which will be consulted on soon, will contain SEN benchmarking information.
- 3.3 Minute 4.2.1 – Centrally Retained DSG – clarification of items
LP explained that the total centrally retained budget increased by 2.5% and these changes are simply movements between budgets. AH asked about the CERA percentage decrease. LP replied that it should be 900% not 90%. JH asked for the variance commentary to be done every year.

AH questioned the increase in cost of PRUs. He said that the figures could increase further and it may not possible to retain pupils in school resulting in an increase need for provision.

JM asked if the centrally retained total has always excluded the under 5s budget. LP replied that it has always been like this. JM asked about the extra cost of extending nursery education. CB explained that a Standards Funds would cover that.

KH asked how many applications are processed by the admissions team. CB said that there are 2,500 in any year group. KH commented that it seems like a lot of money to process a few thousand. GD said that a benchmarking figure can be provided. He added that there is an appeals committee running permanently and dealing with worried parents. AH asked if the cost of appeals was included and that if it is a growing area then costs would also increase. GD explained that foundation and VA schools take that cost on.

Minute 4.2.1 – Insurance

- 3.5 AM asked if all schools will be made aware. LP said she would check what notification has been sent out to schools. JM asked what the situation would be for foundation and VA schools. LP said she will bring more information back next meeting. DO requested information on VA schools to be provided as they may be paying twice.

SP asked if AIG had been checked as a risk factor. DM said can't renege mid contract and that it is monitored by the treasury. LP will bring back more information and ask insurance to attend the next meeting.

Minute 5.3 – London Pay Addition

- 3.6 CB said the grant will be distributed to all schools and the LA will cover the costs.

Minute 5.4 – JCOSS

- 3.7 CB told the Schools Forum that there was no update and no further market research has been done. She said that Ashmole have 50% of children from Barnet and 50% from Enfield, so 30% may be an underestimate.

Minute 5.5 – Contracts

- 3.8 DM presented a list of all contracts that have an impact on schools. She said there was a wide range of traded services which are not published anywhere. She added that these were not confidential and need to be updated regularly. AM asked if contracts for renewals will be advised. DM replied that they would be just as FMSiS last time. AM wanted to know if traded services are compared against other tenders. DM said there is a new process to be embedded.

JH thanked DM for the detailed report. He asked how the Schools Forum can use this information and what is their remit. DM said she will contact procurement about the details. JH said proper timing is needed about contracts. AH wanted to more information about the procurement process and what input the Schools Forum would have. DM said she would provide a summary of the process.

KH asked about the transportation service having a £4m 10 year contract. DM said this was on lease. JM enquired about the connexions service. LP said it was an inhouse service.

Minute 6.1 – Extension to the free entitlement for nursery children (Item 6)

- 3.9 Item 6.1 (On Agenda) – Pilot Funding for Phase 1 Providers
CB presented a paper showing the work being done by the Early years Working Group. She said Sheila Abbott and her team are working with Phase 1 settings to help them decide on issues. All Phase 1s will require additional funding and in 2009/10 £880,000 is available, comprised of a £480,000 ring fenced Standards Funds Grant and £400,000 reserved in the ISB. CB explained the table which showed the proposed funding for Phase 1 providers for the period September 2009 – March 2010 inclusive.

Recommendation: The Schools Forum endorses the above funding scheme for Phase 1 providers of the extension of the free entitlement.

The Schools Forum unanimously agreed.

Proposer: EP

Seconder: GK

Item 6.2 (On Agenda) – Single Funding Formula from April 2010 and Consultation with Providers

CB explained that Private providers and Children's Centres are already funded by participation for the free entitlement, and they make termly claims. From 2010/11 maintained schools will also be funded on termly counts but PVI's and CCs will benefit from a formula that reflects their needs more closely than a single flat rate per child.

CB said that the EYWG recommends consultation on a formula and presented a table to the Schools Forum showing elements to be taken into consideration. She told the members that the consultation will be launched at the beginning of June, giving enough time for the agreement process and then approval by cabinet in January.

AH asked about the qualifications of staff and if there would be training available. CB said this may be possible if there was funding from the council to provide training. SV mentioned that there are grants available to train to QTS level. EP explained that the settings must be able to afford to pay staff with QTS level.

Recommendation: The Schools Forum agrees to support this approach to the development of early years funding for 2010/11 and beyond, and monitor progress over the next 9 months.

The Schools Forum agreed unanimously.

Proposer: JF

Seconder: EP

4. Items for Agreement

4.1 Standards Funds 1.5 – 1-2-1 Tuition

Ieuan Renowden presented the paper explaining Standards Fund Grant 1.5. He explained the grant would be allocated to schools on a formula basis, with the exception of Key Stage Four. The LA proposed for primary and secondary with schools in both phases receiving a basic entitlement, plus an allocation based on the average number of pupil from 2006-2008 not making either two levels progress in primary or three levels in secondary.

AH requested clarity on the funding proposal. He asked if the funding would also be for non teaching and additional teaching staff. IR explained the guidance says only Qualified teachers would be eligible. AH asked if there would need to be an additional contract with an existing employed teacher. IR said the teachers are released and given extra funding. Any tutors from outside of the school would need a separate contract.

JF told the Schools Forum that the issues arising have already been debated and that the members need to understand that a lot of teachers enjoy the

tutoring. HS agreed with JF.

AM asked why the funding will be allocated with a basic entitlement. Ieuan Renowden said it was based on judgment. He said if some schools did not receive basic they would not receive any funding. AM gave an example of The Ravenscroft having 126 eligible pupils and Henrietta Barnet having 1 pupil but both receiving same flat rate. GD said there is an urgency of implementing this funding and it would be helpful if the LA consulted next year. AM asked for a fair formula using past data. GD said a consultation will be sent around next year and will ask the Schools Forum for guidance.

JM explained that selective schools also have children who have difficulties in achieving. AM said exact data showing achievement could be obtained from the DCSF and would be a good basis for allocating funding. JH agreed with AM.

KH said there are other allocations which are funded according to basic entitlement. KW explained that for the 1-2-1 tuition funding it is not a DCSF requirement. DB said the net effect has a small different and is not worth making a fuss about. DO said the basic entitlement would help schools.

GD recommended the Schools Forum to implement the formula this year and next year the LA will bring a different proposal.

The Schools Forum agreed to the proposal.

4.2 Standards Funds 1.2 – School Lunch Grant

Val White presented the report explaining the allocation of the School Lunch Grant. VW explained the formula for funding is the same as last year, however approval is being sought to transfer food and labour element of the funding directly to the in-house provider, for schools buying into the in-house service. VW said this request came from a number of schools and will save money on invoicing costs.

AM asked about the Barnet catering contract date. DM said this was not a service contract. DM will bring back information.

The School agreed to the proposal.

Proposer: JH

Secunder: SP

4.3 2009/10 Schools Budget including Learning and Skills Council

Linda Parker presented a report explaining the changes to the Schools Budget since the February Meeting. She added that despite the changes the central expenditure limit is not breached.

In the report LP explained the changes were a result of the changes in the LSC Funding for 16+, the pupil numbers, minor amendments to the Section 52 Analysis and projected brought forward centrally retained budget under/overspend from 2008/09.

LP told the Schools Forum that the LSC allocation was reduced by £1,022,293 across all schools. She explained the method of how the LSC made the reductions in their funding allocations to schools.

LS told the Schools Forum that the number of actual pupils didn't tally against the number given. She said the pupil numbers used for the DSG have changed since January.

LP continued explaining that the DCSF website had not been updated and is hoping there are no significant variances from February to now. She mentioned that the lines of Section 52 changed because of schools having to submit bids for salary safeguarding costs.

LP said that at the February meeting the Schools Forum were informed that the projected outturn in the centrally retained budget was an overspend of £48,000. In setting the Schools Budget for 2009-10 the projected brought forward overspend from 2008-09 has therefore been removed.

JM asked about LSC funding. LS said the schools will receive what they were promised. CB said that there had been no change to the academic year funding, however schools are concerned about the financial year funding. LS said she would go back and check this. JM explained that all 6th form school need to know this information urgently. LS said she would pass the information back to CB.

LP said that the learner numbers had been restored, however the £1m reduction was due to numbers not being clear when changing from academic to financial year. AM said that the LA need to agree the pupil numbers with the LSC. GD said the numbers would be reported back to JM through CB.

JM asked what the underspend from 2008/09 would be used for. LP replied that once the final outturn is confirmed, options for using any underspend from 2008/09 will then be considered and brought to a future meeting. TB recommended the underspend could be used to help budget pressure for reception places. LP said that there is £400k in the school contingency budget to help increase place numbers from September 2009.

The LA asked the Schools Forum to approve the revised 2009/10 Schools Budget.

The Schools Forum agreed unanimously.

Proposer: AH

Seconder: GK

5 Items for Information

5.1 2008/09 DSG Outturn

LP distributed a tabled paper to the Schools Forum. She presented a report to inform the Schools Forum about the provisional outturn of the centrally retained schools budget.

AM said that there was not sufficient time to check through the analysis and more information was needed. LP told the Schools Forum that this item was for information. JM said this report can be discussed at the next meeting.

5.2 2009/10 Budget Shares

CB presented the report showing the 2009/10 Budget Shares. She told the Schools Forum that the schools received their original budget share and standards funds for 2009/10 on 4th March and indicative 2010/11 three weeks later.

CB said this report is for information and has already been sent out in the School Circular.

5.3 Building Schools for the Future

VW and DM went through a PowerPoint presentation informing the Schools Forum about the BSF Programme. VW said that there are huge financial implications where the LA could get £300m capital investment. She said workshops had already been held with some schools.

VW said the LA were invited to get a submission in by last Friday, which was two years work in eight weeks. The result of the entry will be available soon and the earliest start date would be November 2009. The submission is for the entire secondary estate, which is initially £80m and are likely to get follow on projects if the first phase is successful.

VW informed the Schools Forum that the following schools have been chosen for rebuilding St Marys, PRU, Bishop Douglass, Oak Lodge and Copthall. AM asked how Copthall are eligible and not St James if the programme is aimed at deprived schools. VW replied that Copthall and Friern Barnet are joint and also they don't get money per pupil. KH said transparency is needed. He said the submission was posted on the website today.

DM explained that the BSF is the largest project in the LA and will require project board, teams and management. She said the Government would prefer a LEP and it would be a ICT managed option and PFI. AM said that PFI is only for total rebuild. KH added that there had been bad press. DM replied that it is still the preferred default.

DM told the Schools Forum that a lot of external advice would be needed as it is a complex programme. Dm said the funding envelope includes ICT funding per pupil and can be used across the schools as required.

DM said Barnet's allocations will range between £85m-£332m. She added there is no risk contingency and 0-10% of project cost not yet decided by Barnet. The procurement costs are from £2.9m (no LEP) to £4.3m (LEP). These costs could be higher and the LA will need to find funding for this.

KH said wave 2 starts after wave 1 is complete. VW added that all waves have to be affordable within their envelopes. Wave 3 would be for all other schools which have not been rebuilt. GD mentioned that the general election is only one year away and it is not necessarily a priority for other political parties. AH added that the money may be used for something else.

DM talked about the affordability gap. The presentation showed a number of options. There is an option of VA/Foundation land sales. JH said that land sales are challenging in the recession.

JM asked for the slide show to be distributed. He expressed his concern about post general election landscape. He said that schools as a group must think strategically at the Schools Forum for different scenarios. VW mentioned that opportunities on offer must be taken. There is a chance that by November the LA will be fully committed and will need to know where the money is coming from. KH thanked the LA for submitting the application.

5.5 Update on Nursery Nurses grade review

Tony Lampert presented a paper to the Schools Forum. TL told the Schools Forum of the progress so far. He said they are at a sensitive stage of communications at present and that a settlement is nearly there.

AM said that it was not acceptable for the LA to agree a 52 week contract for 40 weeks work. JD explained that in Children's Centres Nursery Nurses actually work 52 weeks but in the associated school work only 40 weeks. JF expressed her concern for the smaller schools which will be affected badly because there are more costs associated with additional nursery hours.

AM added that if agreed it would set a precedent. DO raised the issue about unions feeling that it is a different job for nurseries in Children's Centres and Schools. TL said any agreement reached will be based on the law and not on a precedent. TL told the Schools Forum that they are negotiating with unions on behalf of schools and will take it back to them.

TL explained the difficult situation which is being dealt by the LA with clear legal advice. KH who is dealing with this situation. TL replied that MB and the HR Officers. AM asked if there were any Headteacher representatives. TL said that all primary school heads were consulted and involved some key nursery heads.

AM said that the schools have to manage disparity and does not want to set a precedent. TL explained that there is lots of history and have had agreement from the Headteachers Advisory Group to go ahead.

JM said that the item is for information.
JM apologised for the length of the meeting.

AOB:
Bigger room needed.

6. Report of the Early Years Working Group

6.1 Matters Arising

7. Dates of future meetings

Tue 6 th Oct 2009	4.30 pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tue 24 th Nov 2009	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)