

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29th June 2023

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 9) ✓ = present ✕ =absent a = apologies
s = substitute

		Attendance				
Primary School Headteachers		15/ 12	19/ 01	01/ 02	29/ 06	Date of Appointment
Manda George	Torridon Primary	✓	✓	a	✓	Jan 2022
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✓	✕	✓	Jan 2022
Julie Loffstadt	Kilmorie	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Matthew Ringham	Our Lady & St Philip Neri	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2022
David Lucas	Trinity	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2021
Maxine Osbaldeston	Launcelot	✓	✓	✕	✓	Jan 2021
VACANT	PRIMARY SCHOOL					
Nursery School Headteacher						
Cathryn Arnold-Kinsey	Clyde Nursery	a	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Secondary School Headteachers						
Naill Hand	Prendergast Ladywell	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2022
Michael Sullivan	Forest Hill	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2022
Special School Headteacher						
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	a	a	✓	✓	Dec 2021
Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher						
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2023
Primary School Governors						
Daniel Meyer	St Bartholomews	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Peter Fidel	Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Federation	✓	✕	✓	✓	June 2021
Secondary & Special School Governors						
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor	✓	✓	✓	a	Jan 2022
Andy Rothery	Leathersellers Federation	✓	✓	✓	✓	June 2021
VACANT	SPECIAL SCHOOL					
Academies						
Miz Mann	STEP Academy Trust	a	a	✓	a	Oct 2021

Ann Butcher	Childeric	✓	✓	✓	✓	June 2021
14-19 Consortium Rep						
Gerard Garvey	Lewisham Southwark College	x	x	x	x	June 2022
Early Years – PVI						
Melanie Simpson	The Village Montessori			a	✓	Jan 2023
Diocesan Authorities						
VACANT	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (Church of England)					
Yvonne Epale	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark	a	✓	a	x	May 2021

Observers/Others in attendance		
Strategic Business Partner	Mala Dadlani	
Director of Education Services	Angela Scattergood	
LB Lewisham - Finance	Lurenco Reynolds-Moxam	
LB Lewisham - Head of Assurance	Rich Clarke	
LB Lewisham – Head of Early Years	Nikki Sealy	
LB Lewisham - Estates	Fiona Gavin	
LB Lewisham - SEND	Reinhild Onuoha	
Governor – Rushey Green School	Rachel Hope	
Governor – Rushey Green School	Daisy Hooper	
Leathersellers Federation	Tony Marnham	
Clerk	Janita Aubun	

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies/ Welcome new members/Member Resignations

Apologies accepted from Pat Barber (Secondary Governor) and Miz Mann (Academies).

New member welcomed: Melanie Simpson (PVI – Early Years sector).

Resignations: Matthew Ringham (Forum Chair/ Primary Headteacher) and Lynne Haines (Special Headteacher).

2. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting 19 January 2023

Minutes all agreed as accurate. No amendments.

4. Minutes of Meeting 01 February 2023

Agenda Item 3 – PFI Consultation

Noted that two forum members (With PFI Factor in formula), requested that the minutes are updated to reflect a level of ambiguity in the outcome of the “desire of schools towards change. LA have noted this comment but however, state that the changes implemented, had been unanimously agreed by the headteachers of the PFI schools as part of the pre Forum discussions. The areas changed specifically around the all-through schools, SEN funding and ensuring that all schools received some funding - these were the changes agreed with Heads and implemented.

5. Matters Arising

Reminded of the request at January forum for review of the Quality Factor. This is work in progress from Nikki Sealy, Head of Early Years.

6. Schools Forum Work Plan 2023/24

This lays down the dates of future meetings including HNSG.
Forum to make a note of the dates of the meetings and the fact that the January 2024 meeting date is dependent on DfE APT response date.

7. Schools Audit 2022/23 – Overall Summary Report

Mala introduced the subject of School Audit to clarify that a positive outcome in an Audit does not mean:-

- the school is in a strong financial position
- or
- that the audit is providing a view on competency of finance staff in school

Audit in schools, is more focused around controls and process – Head of Assurance would provide detail around audit.

Report shared by Head of Assurance.

Noted: Internal audit has been brought back in-house. Changes to testing programme include full results - not only exceptions. Every school in the 2022/23 programme received a positive assurance and all schools were invited to provide feedback on their audit process. Audit will make initial contact with schools who are part of the 2023/24 programme, to discuss logistics.

Discussion on mandatory training for new Headteachers with regards finance, with the view to extend this to existing Heads as well, in the Autumn i.e. shortly after October half-term. Forum supported this idea.

8. Early Years Entitlements Expansion to 2025

Report shared by Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency.

Forum informed that by September 2025, working parents of all children over the age of nine months will be entitled to 30 hours of early years education. To be rolled out in 3 phases: -i.e.

- From April 2024, working parents of 2 year olds will be able to access 15 hours.
- From September 2024, 15 hours early years education will be extended to all children of working parents from age of 9 months till when they start reception.
- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours childcare per week.

Parents will have to apply.

Expectation is that extended school care (wrap around care), will be offered to all families. The Government are setting up a pathfinder to consider the challenges this will bring about.

Early Years team are to arrange Headteacher and SBM briefings once they have absolute information from the DfE, including if any funding is made available and information regarding changes in rates.

9. Mayor of London – Universal Free School Meals

Slides shared for information.

Noted the scheme is for 1 year with the expectation that it will be extended, but no indication of funding, if it extends beyond 1 year.

Anticipated extra 20 – 30% take up of FSM, KS2. Funding will be based on assumed maximum 90% take-up. No longer any clawback. Schools who exceed the 90% take-up, will have to evidence their claim.

Some concern was noted if the £2.65 per meal would be sufficient, however recognising that schools would be funded at 90% of non free school meals pupils – some risk may be mitigated.

Any additional funds needed to purchase additional equipment, schools can contact Fiona Gavin's team for possible assistance, but schools are expected to absorb some of the costs.

Parents may decline applying for FSM because of the existing UIFSM at KS1. This is to the detriment of school's finances. For every child that does not register, a school can lose in the region of £3k.

LA will explore options for auto enrolment to mitigate risk.

Forum raised what are the GDPR implications in asking for NI number and dob to assist in deciding how their child's school meal will be delivered.

Suggested that the Household Support Fund is heavily promoted as an incentive, because of the voucher provision during the school holidays.

Regarding topping up of the grant, there should be no expectations for contributions from parents. Principle is that it is a free meal. Up to schools to consider any decision and the governing body need to undertake any reasonable risk and equality impact if considering this.

UIFSM allowance has been increased from £2.41 to £2.53.

10. High Needs Mitigations & Delivering Better Value – Update

Presentation from the Head of Integrated SEND Service, with updated slides to be sent to members after the meeting.

Noted additional resource bases in Lewisham mainstream schools, e.g. Forster Park, Edmund Waller Primary School. Aiming to open a new resource base at Launcelot Primary School in January 2024, following consultation and Mayor & Cabinet approval.

Expansion in special schools. Tighter monitoring in relation to independent Special out of borough placements. SEN team conducting termly review of banding for children in special schools.

Delivering Better Value (DBV)

Lewisham are part of the DBV programme; we are now in tranche 3.

National and London benchmarking has identified the continued increase in new EHCPs. Lewisham currently lower than the national average, but still the numbers are of concern. SEN team are looking to undertake a pilot scheme for a year (at an additional cost), to incentivise inclusive practice in our schools.

Increase in number of children placed in Lewisham mainstream special school provisions across the board, which is a positive.

Recommendation:-

To support schools who are more inclusive and have more than 5% of learners with EHCP's. Cost of this scheme is expected to be circa £700k. We anticipate this will also have a favourable impact on the transport budget as children can stay in borough. Implementation date to be from Sept 2023, based on October 2022 census. Applies currently to primary & secondary schools, including academies, and will be reviewed after one year.

A concern was raised by a nursery school representative as to whether this proposal would exclude nursery schools from the pilot. Head of SEN to liaise with nursery schools.

Action:-

- Majority agreement in favour. 14 agreed, 1 abstained.

Note that on revisiting the costings, it has transpired that the element of the 5% threshold applies to primary, secondary and also includes the nursery schools.

11. Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23 Including Schools Balances Position

Schools forum noted:-

This is a **provisional** 2022/23 DSG outturn because the Early Years budget is confirmed retrospectively (await January pupil census data) - this is expected to be confirmed July /August 2023 – forum will be updated as appropriate.

High Needs Block continues to overspend although the pace of the overspend appears to be stabilising. This would be linked to work progressing on the mitigation plan.

Continuing pressure on the Central Services Schools Block as the funding continues to reduce by 20% year on year. This is being presently managed partially by management action and support from the general fund.

With regards to the schools surplus/deficit position – overall the number of schools in deficit has increased to 21.

Total surplus balance position has reduced from 2021/22 to 2022/23, biggest reduction is in the primary sector @ 41%.

Mala advised Forum that their remains concern at the number of budget plans that appear either too optimistic (risk is school going into deficit). Or alternatively too pessimistic, again a risk with some schools continuing to build surpluses.

LA as stated in the February budget setting letter, will be writing to the COG with a view of the budget plans submitted including any requirements for DRP/DPP based on the June budget plans submitted. This is to formally ensure accountability for setting budgets, remains at the Governing Board level.

Observer questioned, how we might redistribute large surplus balances throughout the borough. Can we consider? Position is that Forum agreed several years ago that there will be no clawback mechanism, as such the Local Authority does not have clawback mandate at present. In the event clawback was to be considered (balance control mechanism), a full consultation would be required with discussion and approval from school's forum.

12. Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 and Update on Other Specific Grants

Forum provided with update on the 2023/24 DSG, noting the continuing pressure on the CSSB and the High Needs Budgets. Informed that High needs has 5% increase in funding but Lewisham has in fact received circa 3%, because there are many schools who are net losers.

Confirmed grants for 2023/24:-

- Pupil premium 2023/24,
- Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG),
- National Tutoring Programme (NTP),
- Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)
- Universal Infant free school meals (UIFSM).

For most schools MSAG was correct. For some schools there was movement in FSM6 -which generated small variations against figures exemplified.

Regarding the teachers' pay award, the pay review body assumes that schools be able to afford circa 4.5%. Note our salary estimator tool factors in 5% estimated affordability. At this present time, we do not know if the DfE will award additional funding.

Regarding non-teacher pay, no pay award 2023/24 has been agreed. If agreed, it will be backdated to April.

Reminder that schools must continue to review their budget plans to capture on going changes.

Forum requested summary bullet points on this discussion to be taken back to Primary and Secondary Consultative Heads – this was agreed.

13. Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 – Updates Towards Hard Formula – Plus PFI Consultation

Discussion around the following:-

Risk surrounding growth fund as not confirmed.

As it stands the DfE are looking to consider the PFI as a hard formula. Engagement with schools will be required shortly after the summer holidays. Transitional protection – how long should this be? Should any extra money released, be added to the lump sum or the

targeted element? Or do we change the collaboration of the formula with Forum agreement?

Officers ask that all PFI schools have sight of this paper in advance – to be shared at Secondary Heads Consultative.

Schools forum was asked to:

- note the Movement of the split sites and Growth Fund to hard formula from 2024/25.
- agree to the further consultation with schools (who receive PFI factor) from September to end of October. The outcome of this to be reported to schools forum for inclusion in the 2024/25 funding formula.

Action:-

- All noted and agreed.

14. Any Other Business

Noted the following:-

Schools Forum Constitution

Some potential changes taking place arising from schools converting to academy status. Review of constitution likely following October Census and agreed conversion dates.

Election of Chair

This will be the first agenda item for the Autumn Schools Forum meeting. Manda George is happy to self-nominate as Chair going forward and is equally happy to remain as Vice-Chair. Interested members can contact Manda/Matthew for further details about the role if they wish.

Forum thanked Matthew Ringham for all his hard work as Schools Forum Chair.

Forum also wished Lynne Haines, Special School Headteacher, a very happy retirement.

Future Meetings

19 October 2023

14 December 2023

18 January 2024 (provisional date, subject to DfE)

All Schools Forum meetings continue to be held between 16:30-18:30 and remain virtual, unless advised otherwise.

Sub Group meetings

<u>High Needs Sub Group</u>
11 October 2023
7 December 2023
11 January 2024

Schools Forum Action Summary

Item	Action to be taken	Officer(s) responsible	Outcome/Current position
8 – AOB Schools forum 15 December 2022	Cost of living crisis - to lobby at National Level. Letter currently being written and will be presented to the forum for approval.	All headteachers	Outstanding
5 – Summary of the Schools Funding Settlement 2023/24, Schools Forum 19 January 2023	Head of Early Years to provide a paper on distribution of early years funding relating to quality factor – for forum approval.	Nikki Sealy	Outstanding
7 - Schools Audit 2022/23 – Overall Summary Report – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	Plan for mandatory training for new Headteachers, with the view to extend this to existing Heads as well; in the Autumn i.e. shortly after October half-term. (good financial management in schools)	Mala Dadlani	Pending (November)
10 – High Needs Mitigations & Delivering Better Value Update – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	Updated slides to be sent to members after the meeting which incorporate amendments regarding recent central census and school census data.	Reinhild Onuoha	Outstanding
12 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 and Update on Other Specific Grants – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	Forum requested summary bullet points on this discussion to be taken back to Primary and Secondary Consultative Heads – this was agreed.	Mala Dadlani	Completed - Slides Oct 12 th with Headteachers
13 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 – Updates Towards Hard Formula – Plus PFI Consultation – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	The outcome of the further consultation with schools (who receive PFI factor) from September to end October, this is to be reported to Schools Forum for inclusion in the 2024/25 funding formula.	Mala Dadlani/Niall Hand	Pending
14 – AOB – Schools Forum Constitution – Schools Forum 29 June 2023 AOB – Election of Forum Chair – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	To check and review in relation to academies. Election of Schools Forum Chair at next meeting.	Mala Dadlani Members	December 2023 Forum October 2023 Forum