

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19th October 2023

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 7) ✓ = present ✕ =absent a = apologies
s = substitute

		Attendance				
Primary School Headteachers		19/ 01	01/ 02	29/ 06	19/ 10	Date of Appointment
Manda George	Torridon Primary	✓	a	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✕	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Julie Loffstadt	Kilmorie	✓	✓	✓	a	Jan 2022
David Lucas	Trinity	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2021
Maxine Osbaldeston	Launcelot	✓	✕	✓	a	Jan 2021
VACANT	PRIMARY SCHOOL					
VACANT	PRIMARY SCHOOL					
Nursery School Headteacher						
Cathryn Arnold-Kinsey	Clyde Nursery	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2022
Secondary School Headteachers						
Naill Hand	Prendergast Ladywell	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2022
Michael Sullivan	Forest Hill	✓	✓	✓	a	Oct 2022
Special School Headteacher						
VACANT	SPECIAL SCHOOL					
Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher						
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	✓	✓	✓	✓	Jan 2023
Primary School Governors						
Daniel Meyer	St Bartholomews	✓	✓	✓	a	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						
VACANT	ACADEMY					

Ann Butcher	Childeric	✓	✓	✓	*	June 2021
14-19 Consortium Rep						
Jamie Stevenson	Lewisham College				a	Oct 2023
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	*	✓	May 2021

Observers/Others in attendance		
Strategic Business Partner	Mala Dadlani	
LB Lewisham	Matthew Henaughan	
LB Lewisham - Finance	Lurenco Reynolds-Moxam	
LB Lewisham	Ruth Griffiths	
LB Lewisham – Head of Early Years	Nikki Sealy	
LB Lewisham - SEND	Reinhild Onuoha	
LB Lewisham – Early Years	Tiffany Gordon	
Leathersellers Federation	Tony Marnham	
NEU	James Kerr	
Clerk	Janita Aubun	

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

Apologies accepted from Julie Loffstadt (Primary Headteacher), Michael Sullivan (Secondary Headteacher) and Daniel Meyer (Primary Governor).

Member Resignation: Miz Mann (Academies)

2. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. Election of Chair

Clerk invited nominations for position of Chair. 1 nomination received - Manda George (former Vice-Chair). No objections hence Manda was elected to Forum Chair with immediate effect.

4. Election of Vice Chair

There is now a vacancy for Vice Chair. Newly elected Chair invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair. No nominations were received. Forum agreed to take this vote forward to the next meeting. Interested members can have a conversation with MG should they wish to know more about the position. The election and nomination of Vice Chair to be the first item on the agenda at December forum.

5. Minutes of the Meeting – 29th June 2023

Amendment to be made on the attendance registers 29th June 2023 and 1st February 2023. To be corrected for the next meeting.

Agenda Item 10: High Needs Mitigations & Delivering Better Value Update

Error in the report. Minutes correction with reference to 'It was confirmed that the agreement to provide additional funding to education settings with more than 5% of learners with EHCPs would also apply to nursery schools'.

6. Matters Arising

Forum constitution – membership to be recast following validation of October pupil Census data and Academisation. Potential changes taking place around expected academisation and other existing vacancies e.g. special schools. Recast to take place at January forum. Note, vacancies exist for Special School representatives on Forum.

Schools Forum Action Summary - Cost of living crisis lobby - rethink - do Forum want to make any representation to the Secretary of State regarding the 2024/25 funding allocation error? Forum felt it was worth raising concerns with the DfE/Secretary of State. Chair will draft letter and bring back to schools forum for discussion.

Mandatory Training for new Headteachers, - Due to workload demands this will be postponed.

PFI consultation - meeting scheduled for after half-term. Naill Hand to Support Mala.

7. Lewisham School Place Planning

Primary – slight increase in numbers compared to previous, but downward trend in reception numbers; peak was in 2017. Numbers expected to increase by 2027/28. Short Term measure – LA allocation Caps 2023/24 (can happen in any year group as requested). Medium term measure – continue to reduce by 1 – 2 FE per year, PAN reduction by admissions arrangements or by capping.

Secondary – increase in number of applications for Year 7 cohort over the past 2 years.

Options for reducing numbers are: -

- LA allocations CAP (quickest and easiest option) - non-official PAN reduction which doesn't override parental choice. PAN remains the same. Can be implemented any time and removed at any time.
- In-year PAN reduction which is done via the Office of Schools Adjudicator; can take up to 8 weeks for a decision.

- Determined Admission Arrangements. Mayor & Cabinet decision. Permanent change in PAN. Consultations for 2025 entry to commence in next couple of weeks. Decision in February 2024.

Forum informed that Schools Place Planning have set up a Task and Finish Group to look at how Lewisham deals with the over/under supply of places. New set of principles have been developed from this. Further meeting to follow and results of this meeting will be shared with Headteachers and Governing Bodies.

Question raised regarding Westminster parliamentary debate earlier this year on school places where Lewisham Year 7 admissions showing 10 – 15% reduction by 2026/7. Officers stated that this parliamentary report is based on previous data which has since been revised and is more positive.

Discussion regarding union having met with Sadiq Khan and whether modelling could be done on smaller class sizes within schools. Members raised the issue of mixed year groups and the impact on financial viability.

As requested, the nursery sector is to be represented in the Task and Finish Group.

8. High Needs Working Group Update

Verbal update and slides shared by the Head of Integrated Services SEND. Schools Forum were made aware that this update follows on from the High Needs Working Group meeting held 11 October 2023, as well as the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme currently been undertaken – sessions have been held with DfE/Newton on 9th and 10th October. Newton provided a High Impact Analysis report which shows that our highest spend is on children in maintained special schools, next highest is in independent non-maintained special sector, followed by spend on children in mainstream schools with EHCP plans. Key factor is the growth is demand led.

Forum were informed that steady progress is being made to stabilise spend, however the demand and severity of need continues to place pressure. Are currently reviewing SEND priorities in line with DBV recommendations, continuing to create local SEN places for children, supporting schools with their SEN practices, working with local colleges on High Needs and working with early years settings on improving their practices.

This update also noted links to be reported on the DSG.

Also discussion around secondary schools and the fact that they are full in years 7, 8, 9 & 10 and that admission to their schools is now only, through direction over PAN.

Schools forum PRU representative requested to be included in the discussions and negotiations i.e. part of the working party for the secondary phase.

9. Application of Quality Factor of Early Years Funding Block

Report shared by Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency, to approve the application of the Quality Factor which is £372K.

Forum members asked to make a decision on 1 of 4 options.

Option 1 – total funding £372,000 divided by the number of providers with a qualified teacher (117 staff). This equates to an allocation of £3,179.

Option 2 – considers providers weighted by the number of children on role in each setting, with a teacher and at the time of the EY and Schools Census in January 2023. Total number of children would then be divided by the total funding. This amount would then be multiplied by the number of children on role ay January 2023 census and allocated individually.

Option 3 – this allocates a one-off payment to all providers who provide early entitlement funding, equally. By dividing £372K by the total number of providers. Note it does not target those providers who have additional costs associated with higher qualified staff and also does not recognise that each setting has different numbers of children on role.

Option 4 - members asked if we should postpone and there be an option 4. It was felt that there is a significant difference between the costs of a nursery school employing many teachers and a private nursery employing one member of staff with early years teaching status. A vote was taken on this with a resulting majority 8 in favour. Agreed to come back to December forum with a costed option, for a vote to be taken then.

10. Early Years – Pressure on Inclusion Fund

Forum informed about the increasing pressure on this fund, circa £200k overspent. Increased applications are being made annually; particularly post pandemic. Potential overspending budget. Options are – do nothing i.e. overspend. Restrict/limit the number of agreed applications or increase the top-up to the budget from contingency or DAF underspend.

Recommendation:-

- Schools forum agree the use of the 2022/23 carry forward to support the overspend on the 2023/24 Inclusion Fund.
- Schools forum further note the change in practice of the inclusion fund to reflect the rising demand within the financial constraints.
- Schools forum also to note that a post implementation review be appropriate for the proposed changes, recognising any local offer must remain within the financial consideration.
- £600K remaining – to support the High Needs Block.

Action:-

- Report noted and all recommendations agreed.

11. DSG Update Including 2022/23 Final Early Years Position, 2023/24 Updated DSG & Headline Information 2024/25

This report provided forum an update of the final EY block position in relation to the 2022/23 DSG, an update on the 2023/24 DSG allocation position, following the 2022/23 Early Years data validation process. Also forum were given headline updates with regards to 2024/25 funding.

2023/24 Central Schools Services block continues to face pressure because the grant is abated year on year. Despite this, the LA has not reduced any of the services that we have always provided to schools.

Recommendation:-

- To approve the application of the £800K 2022/23 funding which was not clawed back.
- Support the expected overspend on the Inclusion Fund of £200K.
- Support the pressure on the HNB i.e. the £600K cost of Early Years on the High Needs Block.
- Note the extension of the EY offer will require embedding support from the Local Authority; schools forum to be updated as necessary.
- Schools Forum is asked to note that in partnership with Lewisham, there is a duty to operate within the overall funding levels.
- The funding is 'once-off' as it relates to residue from 2022/23. It should be noted that the proposals support that funding is targeted towards the Early Years phase.
- Schools forum is also asked to note the 2023/24 forecast position and also the 2024/25 partial settlement.

Action:-

- Agreed to approve the application of the £800K 2022/23 funding which was not clawed back. 8 voted in favour i.e. majority agreement for the use of this amount to support the £200K inclusion fund 2023/24.
- Forum agreed the remaining £600K to be used to support the High Needs Block (recognising the increased pressure arising from the emerging needs on the under 5 age group with SEN/EHCP). 8 voted in favour i.e. majority vote.
- All the other above recommendations were noted.

12. Any Other Business

FSM Auto enrolment update – verbal update

Information shared to forum: worked with colleagues in the wider council to see if any families potentially entitled to FSM - positive result securing circa £1.3M extra funding. Noted and schools forum recognised the positive work.

Future Meetings

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>

Schools Forum Action Summary

Item	Action to be taken	Officer(s) responsible	Outcome/Current position
6 – Matters Arising - Schools Forum 19 October 2023	Cost of living crisis - to lobby at National Level. Letter to be drafted for forum approval, making representation to the DfE/Secretary of State regarding the 2024/25 funding allocation error.	Chair	
Training for New Headteachers	Mandatory training to be held in November 2023.	Mala Dadlani	Pending
9 – Application of Quality Factor of Early Years Funding Block – 19 October 2023	Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency factor to come back with a costed Option 4, for a vote to be taken then.	Nikki Sealy	For December forum.
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
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	Completed and included in the DSG paper for 2024/25
14 – AOB – Schools Forum Constitution – Schools Forum 29 June 2023	To check and review in relation to academies.	Mala Dadlani	January 2023 Forum
AOB – Election of Vice Chair – Schools Forum 19 October 2023	Nominations/election of Schools Forum Vice Chair at next meeting.	Members	December 2023 Forum