

DRAFT

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th July 2020

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

		Attendance					
Primary School Headteachers		11/07	17/10	12/12	16/01	09/07	Date of Appointment
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	✓	✓	a	a	✓	Dec 2018
Manda George	Torridon Primary	✓	a	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Keith Barr	Kender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Matthew Ringham	Our Lady & St Philip Neri	✕	a	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Nursery School Headteacher							
Cathryn Kinsey	Clyde Nursery	✓	✓	✓	✓		Oct 2018
Secondary School Headteachers							
Naill Hand	Prendergast Ladywell		✓	✓	✓	✓	July 2019
David Sheppard	Leathersellers Federation	✓	✓	a	✓	✓	June 2018
Mark Phillips	Deptford Green	✓	✕		✓	✓	Jan 2020
Clare Cassidy	Sedgehill	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2017
Special School Headteacher							
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	✓	✓	a	✓	✓	Oct 2018

Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher							
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	a	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2017
Primary School Governors							
Rosamund Clarke	Perrymount	a	✓	a	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Secondary & Special School Governors							
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor	✓	a	a	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Ruth Elliott	Watergate	✓	✓	✓	✓	a	Mar 2019
Academies							
Dr Tesca Bennett	Haberdashers' Knights Academy	✓	✓	✓	✓	a	Oct 2018
14-19 Consortium Rep							
Asfa Sohail	Lewisham Southwark College		✓	a	✓	✓	Mar 2019
Early Years – PVI							
Dawn Nasser	Rose House Montessori	✓	a	✓	x		Jan 2017
Diocesan Authorities							
Sara Sanbrook-Davies	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2016
Yvonne Epale	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark	✓	a	a	✓	x	Feb 2018

Lynne Haines	Forum Chair	✓	✓	a	✓	✓	Oct 2017
Keith Barr	Forum Vice-Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2017

Also Present		
Angela Scattergood		Director of Education Services
Mala Dadlani		Group Finance Manager
Lurenco Reynolds-Moxam		LB Lewisham
Dorte Newman		Clerk

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies

None.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting – 16 January 2020

Agreed.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Finance Workplan

The purpose of the report was to provide the proposed meeting dates and work plans for Schools Forum over the coming year.

Meeting dates are strategically placed to gain input from Forum at the most appropriate times.

The plan was presented, recognising and incorporating the current Covid adjustments to The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. Four meetings have been planned for this financial year.

- July, main focus is update following the closing of the accounts and updated information on DSG.
- November, common practice for the DfE to supply consultation documents and policy decisions during the summer break, these will be considered at this meeting.
- December, requiring mandate from Schools forum on any key issues that would inform detailed working over the Christmas break – to agree the following years budget position, and taking stock of 2020/21.
- January is the strategic budget setting meeting. DfE expect APT tool back, 2-3 days after the Forum is due to meet. Mala develop the Funding Formula as outlined at December meeting Funding Settlement is due circa 22nd December in the case where anything unexpected LA will update the Chair and Vice Chari for direction - and further discussion at the forum meeting

We are currently expecting updates from the DfE with regards to

- The hard formula high needs, this include a high needs review. We are expecting a consultation, and need to evaluate the risks.
- Early years supplementary factor , we are expecting it to be in place this year and potentially next, not sure thereafter. Would anticipate some direction from DfE regarding Exit Strategy not just a complete ceassation.
- Hospital provision is under review.
- Streamlining Teacher Pay and possibly the Pension Grant, currently separate grants. From 2021/22 at least the Pay Grant will streamline into the DSG, this risk London authorities statistically losing out, this will depend on the proposals for the allocation, if it is by pupil numbers, then the risk is mitigated. If overarching £X billion in overall pot uplifting on all factors of the formula, this will dilute what Lewisham receive. We have not got the information but, it will happen, and the forum must be mindful of risk.

Due to Covid, some of this may be deferred, and the consultation may be too late for next year's budget.

Comment David Sheppard, good to note pension grant risks. Also, schools moved delivery online since the 21st March, hospital provision must be taken into account as it is online tutoring. Most of hospital outreach is online.

When Angela and Mala started, risks around the high needs block were highlighted, this will be discussed later in this meeting, there is a continued need for high need working group to carry on, Mala asked if any members wanted to join it. Schools Forum asked for a list of the current membership - The profile need to be raised. Next meeting Sept 24th they may still re-arrange the planned meeting today possibly to next week. The High Needs mitigation plan has already been presented to forum, it would be helpful if more people took part to influence the outcome. Martin Cunningham has volunteered to join the group.

Comment David Sheppard, the meeting plan is giving forum direction of travel at future meeting, any changes need to be sent to the Forum members. David suggested that meetings should be physical attendance with an option to digital access as well, this was supported by the members.

Meeting dates for information

Schools Forum

Month	Date	Time	Venue
July	9 th	4.30 to 6.30	Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
October	15 th	4.30 to 6.30	Civic Suite, Committee Room 3 with virtual access
December	10 th	4.30 to 6.30	Civic Suite, Committee Room 3 with virtual access
January	21 st (subject to change dependant of DfE timelines)	4.30 to 6.30	Civic Suite, Committee Room 3 with virtual access

High Needs Working Group

Month	Date	Time	Venue
July	9 th	11.00 to 13.00	Teams or Zoom
September	24 th	14.30 to 16.30	Teams or Zoom
October	1 st	11.00 to 13.00	Teams or Zoom
December	3 rd	11.00 to 13.00	Teams or Zoom
January	28 th	11.00 to 13.00	Civic Suite, Committee Room 3 with virtual access

6. DSG 2019/20 Outturn Position including Schools Balance Position

The purpose of this report was to update Schools Forum with regards to the 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position including the position with regards to Schools Balances.

The main concern is the pressure on the High Needs block which is likely to give lead to DfE intervention.

The final position net forecast is £108k- High Needs block has overspent by circa £630k despite Schools Block supported with circa £800k and a provisional underspend of £520k in the Early Years block.

Early Years block is provisional, we have not had the final funding which is based on the January 2019 and January 2020 census, the data cleansing process is not complete, the final position will be brought back to the next Forum meeting.

The overspend position of high needs, Lewisham is not unique, most LA's have been overspending, some working on mitigation plans, we have to look at dramatic changes and support from other blocks.

We have a mitigation plan in place, within your pack in appendix a you see Trend Movement in EHCP's using 2017/18 as the benchmark of 2179 EHCP's. In 2020/21 there is an increase of 541 EHCP from the benchmark, 238 in post-secondary, the SEN reforms 2014 extended the age of pupils with EHCP's, the 0-5 and post 18 are adding pressure to our budget.

The next table show the different need bands of the EHCP's, the severity of needs with highest costs has increased significantly. Prices are driven by the market place with the increases creating difficulty in market place, leading to higher costs. Placement are in Lewisham and out of borough, there are more out of borough now due to the growth, this is more costly. We would like to create in borough places, but this is a timed decision, it cannot have immediate effect, we cannot change current children's provision. Newly diagnosed children who get an EHCP, will be placed in borough if it is possible.

Comment Angela Scattergood, the mitigation plan is a long term piece of work, increasing places in mainstream. The Early Years inclusion fund is in place to meet needs earlier. This is work in progress and a priority. The High Needs group have discussed this, it has been updated, and will be signed off by group. A fundamental element of the mitigation plan cover the post 18.

Post 18, is a newer policy with regards to EHCP's and has seen significant growth, but the pupils in Lewisham schools who come into this age band are known, so it is this predictable.

Comment Mala Dadlani, Lewisham is very mobile, housing is cheap, there is migration to Lewisham to utilise the benefits. Be mindful, a lot of the children would have left the system at 18 historically, we have incoming young people but this is an unknown factor. These all contribute to the pressure on the high needs block

A Statement from Parliament was included in the papers for this meeting, sharing sentiment and raising the profile at House of Commons, creating awareness of the cost pressures. In December last year Government raised additional funding, it gave Lewisham a bit more money but not enough. We were ok, but we face challenges and overall duty of care.

Forum was asked to note the reported concerns on pressures, and likely that Covid will add further cost pressure.

It was suggested that a representative from the post 18 sector should attend the High Needs Working Group- Asfa Sohail will organise this.

The summary of school balances are show in Table 1.21 within Mala's report, the overall surplus c/fwd. 2019/20 is 19m, this is a reduction of 2m from 2018/19, within the figures there is an interesting dynamics. 11 schools are in deficit, 13 with a surplus within tolerance (historic 8% used, today's money for today's pupils) 53 schools have more than 9% surplus. It is the schools money, this report is bringing it to the Forums attention, many schools have large surpluses, many schools are keeping and building on their reserves, they need to be used to impact on schools improvement.

No comments were made

Schools Forum Noted the Following: Noted the content of the paper

7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21

The purpose of this report was to update Schools Forum, with regards to the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

This is a briefing statement of where we are, January showed the grossed level for the borough, now we are showing the funding in Lewisham, less the top sliced for recoupment to academies, the High Needs block including the import/export adjustments (i.e. net placements made to and from other boroughs for High Needs)

Mala wanted to bring it to Forum's attention, that based on potential figures we are looking at a potential overspend of at least £4m but likely £5m This is circa £2.6m higher than 2019/20 outturn, and include an increase of 93 known EHCP's at a cost of £1.5m.

The mitigation plan will take time to embed but the risk is that pressure will outstrip the savings - , the additional risks are increases in EHCP's, additional costs due to Covid and further pay inflation over the projected built into the budget. This would add to the potential overspend previously stated.

Comment David Sheppard, early in the year Schools Forum moved contingency of £860k from the Schools Block to the High Needs block in the 2019/20 financial year. The first paper show the 2.5m deficit £860k (Sch. Block) +£750k (DfE support) +£630k (High Needs). Question for Clarity if the funding blocks are restricted –Mala said yes, any movement is with forum agreement and the LA in conjunction with Schools Forum has a duty to ensure spend is within the grant allocations - David recognises that it is complicated, but it is good that we have started to put things in place to mitigate overspend positions.

8. Verbal Updates

Term time only

Term time only claims – further work is continuing with colleagues from legal and Hr. At this stage no further update can be provided.

Covid Claim

Gentle reminder of the 21/7/2020 deadline, the DfE has made it clear that they will not be extending the deadline.

it is the schools and their governing body who make the decision and the claim. Some aspects of the Grant feel uncomfortable, Angela and Panaki recently spoke to the DfE, but to challenge policy we need comprehensive information. A Survey will go out to all schools tomorrow (10/7/2020), Mala urge every school to respond, and she needs this to lobby the DfE. Mala will not speak to them if we do not have a good response.

Loss of income is a huge issue for some schools, many recycle it into curriculum development. It is not only a question of losses Apr-Jul 2020 but more so longer term. The structural impact on schools if letting companies do not return their business, the reason for using the schools may have changed reflecting the way everyone has been working during Covid.

FSM, there is a clear discrepancy between using Edenred and Surplus schools, whilst using Edenred all schools can claim, it is therefore recommended that all schools should claim for their cost incurred before Edenred was working, as they would have benefitted.

Restructures, consultations timeline must have been enabling schools to start their processes but couldn't due to Covid, any evidence shown in the survey will be used to raise issues with the Lewisham Directors and the DfE where appropriate.

The grant is only for schools with an in year deficit. This seems inconsistent for those schools who were not able to use Edenred due to portal issues

High Needs update

Covered above

Nursery Schools

Covered

Schools Forum Membership

The Forum will be aware of Sedgehill schools academisation, Mala has done the calculation for the membership within the different groups, but feel that it is better to wait for the October Census as the calculation is reliant on pupil numbers. The Forum will need to review membership at the next meeting

Lynn on behalf of Schools Forum thanked David Sheppard for his contribution and wished David the very best for the future.

David thanked everyone, saying working with everyone has been great.

Cathryn Kinsey is going on maternity leave, her replacement is Nikki Oldham

Other issues

David Sheppard mentioned that the RPA scheme has been released by the DfE, it is an insurance sinking fund, made available to all maintained schools, it is expected to be cheaper and need to be a formal item for discussion by the Forum, and it could lead to potential savings. Angela Scattergood had asked for a representative from the insurance department to come to the Forum, but they were not available. The current position means that schools are tied into the current arrangement until Nov 2020. All information will be sent to all schools to form part of the Forum discussions.

Forum would also like to understanding the reason why the nursery provision funding in Lewisham receive less per hour to other London boroughs?. Mala, met with the DfE and talked about the free school meals and EAL numbers which are low on the Lewisham benchmark data, this impact on Early Years formula. We hope that they will review this in future as the FSM has increased. Looking at the rates enhancement, ours is lower. Lewisham has had a drive to record EAL, DfE asked why this has increase significantly. Another driving factor, deprivation, only changes every 5 years. PVI's are in huge difficulty, we need to keep reviewing this.

Mala asked the Forum to be mindful, the increases in the returns will not feed into Census before January 2021 and therefore inform funding for 2022/23

There was a question around raising the £2.30 for meals charge to parents – Will seek clarification from the Estate and contracts manager.

There could be a potential shortfall on costs owed to Chartwells, which would then need to be a pressure on the Catering Reserve. The Estate and Contracts Manager is currently working with Chatwells in line with Government Guidance to seek a fair agreement to support Chartwells over the Covid Period.

9. Any Other Business.

None.

Future meetings

15th October 2020

10th December 2020

21st January 2021 (subject to change dependent on DfE timelines)

All meetings will be held between 16.30 and 18.30