

## Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall**

**Present:-** Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chairman)  
Dr. A. Bruton (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs. C. Draper  
Mrs. M. Sheehy  
Ms. T. Coles  
Mr. G. Crowther  
Mr. N. Smith  
Mrs. J. Ward  
Mrs. G. Healy  
Mr. E. Gee  
Ms. M. Yates  
Mrs. M. Woodcock  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. B. Powell  
Mr. M. Ison  
Mr. S. Pritchard-Jones  
Mr. R. Bragger

Mr. S. Davies attended as substitute for Mr. G. Thornton

**In Attendance:-** Rose Collinson - Interim Director of Children's Services, Walsall MBC  
Louise Hughes - Assistant Director, Children's Services, Walsall MBC  
Jane Doughty - Lead Officer for School Improvement, Walsall MBC  
Dan Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC  
Dawn Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1. 11.2.14</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Ms. H. Harnisch, Mr. A. Orlik, Mr. J. Murray, Ms. J. Morgan and Mrs. B.E. Westwood.</p> <p>Mr. Murray and Ms. Morgan had also tendered their resignations.</p> <p>Mr. N. Smith informed the Forum that this would be his last meeting as he was due to retire and that Ms. C. Fraser would be appointed to the Forum. Ms. Fraser had also submitted her apologies for this meeting.</p>	<p>Glenys Ensor to write</p>

<b>2. 11.2.14</b>	<b>Minutes - 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2014</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> January, 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
<b>3. 11.2.14</b>	<b>Matters arising from the minutes</b>  With regard to paragraph 2 on page 5, Mrs. Coles informed the Forum that the meeting to promote an investigation into meeting the needs of pupils requiring special education had not yet taken place but would feed back in March.  Mr. Bragger referred to Item 3 on page 2 relating to Premature Retirement and confirmed that a response was still awaited from the Council.	
<b>4. 11.2.14</b>	<b>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</b>  There were no late items for introduction by the Chairman.	
<b>5. 11.2.14</b>	<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b>  There were no items for consideration in the private session.	
<b>6. 11.2.14</b>	<b>Principles of Future Surplus use and Proposals (principally Early Years)</b>  A report was submitted.  Mr. Mortiboys outlined the content of the report.  After discussion it was,  <b>Resolved</b>  (1) That Schools Forum approves the use of £1m of underspend from 2013/14, 2 year old place funding (Time 2 Start) on School	

	<p>Readiness activities to be delivered through Children Centres (Early Help Areas). This would ensure that 2 year olds received the benefit of funding intended for them;</p> <p>(2) That, in order to ensure the effectiveness of this investment, Schools Forum form a Sub Group to monitor the development of plans to use the funding, monitor the impact of the funding and ensure value for money; the Sub Group to consist of Mrs. J. Ward and Mrs. B. Westwood;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum will decide whether a pot of money is a surplus or windfall and following that decision, it will decide upon its dispersal;</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum note that the investment of 2 year old funds may be subject to Secretary of State Approval and endorse a submission going to the Secretary of State to seek approval and delegate to the Chair and Vice-Chair to endorse any submission if needed before the next meeting of Schools Forum.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> <b>11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>Update on National Funding Formula</b></p> <p>The Forum was advised that no update was available.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b> <b>11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>School to School support</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Jane Doughty, Interim Lead Officer for School Improvement, highlighted the content of the report.</p> <p>In response to points raised, the Chairman confirmed that work was ongoing to resolve the situation relating to pupils both in special education and in mainstream schools to ensure that their needs were being met appropriately.</p> <p>Ms. Morris referred to a high needs template which was completed in November, 2012 indicating the number of places across the year to include</p>	

	<p>September, 2013/14 academic year. Places were commissioned on the basis of children in schools in April and once commissioning had been completed, those figures could not be re-addressed. The final template was sent in January and was used by the DfE to calculate the high needs block. A similar process applied in respect of 2014/15 with a deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The template had been pre-populated by the Education Funding Agency based on the information contained in the 2013/14 document and showed no growth.</p> <p>Ms. Collinson undertook to provide a short briefing note for the March meeting to update Members on the progress with regard to Special Schools and Special Education within the mainstream school sector.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the surplus on the high needs block this year would support vulnerable learners in 2014/15.</p> <p>Ms. Doughty informed the Forum that the “Achievement for All Learners” was owned and delivered by a national organisation that Walsall had contracted with and worked with schools across Walsall to support vulnerable learners; if Schools Forum agreed to this work, the company would work with a smaller group of Head Teachers.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that high needs funding, if not used this year, could be used for any budget next year, if not used it would become part of a surplus and would be available for allocation in the next financial year. In order for the money to go through Section 251 Statement, it would have to be spent on frontline resources, for example, specialist teachers going into schools to work, unless a request was made to the Secretary of State to use the funding more widely.</p> <p>Ms. Collinson informed the Forum that this matter would be considered at the Special Heads meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 and suggested that the information be submitted to the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 Schools Forum.</p>	
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	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That a report on the school recovery programme be submitted to the Schools Forum meeting to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.</p>	
<p><b>9. 11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>Capital implication of school meals requirement for maintained schools</b></p> <p>A briefing note was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys referred to the report to the last meeting of Schools Forum regarding universal free school meals. A bid review team consisting of the Chair of the Primary Forum, Chair of Schools Forum, Jane Bonner (or their representatives) and Denis O'Rourke had been set up and when bids were signed off, the works could progress. He confirmed that no providers had yet been identified and schools would need to bid according to their requirements and those bids would be ranked. Funding would only be available in respect of non-free school meals, however, no guidance from the Education Funding Agency had been circulated; meals would be funded at £2.30 on the meals taken up.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the information on capital implication of school meals requirements for maintained schools be noted.</p>	
<p><b>10. 11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>Funding for the first year of Walsall Governors Association</b></p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that Walsall Governors Association was keen to be more active in Walsall and was requesting pump priming from Schools Forum in the form of £10,000. The Association would become self-financing in future years.</p> <p>Mrs. Yates confirmed that there was no structure in Walsall for Governors to share best practice and network and it was felt necessary that Walsall Governors needed to support themselves. There</p>	

	<p>was an increased emphasis by Ofsted on Governors and the close links between successful schools and successful Governors. The proposal would include sessions free to all schools to access in order that Governors would get the full support from all schools and following on from that, it would be necessary for schools to subscribe into the venture.</p> <p>Mr. Hodgkinson spoke in support of the proposal and confirmed that Governors did receive support prior to the end of the education contract.</p> <p>Ms. Yates confirmed that the proposal would be open to all school sectors.</p> <p>Mrs. Doughty informed the Forum that there was a support team in the School Improvement Team whose services could be purchased via a Service Level Agreement, it would be important to link with that structure.</p> <p>Ms. Hughes confirmed that 3 Governor support officers were still in post and provided a traded service giving direct advice and guidance, supporting Governing Bodies when schools were in challenging situations. The Council was providing support to School Governors and all School Governors could access "ten Governor". The Governor Support Team had not decreased.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That a proposal be submitted to the March meeting of Schools Forum to enable funding to be identified if agreed.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b> <b>11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>Special Schools Funding Formula</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.</p>	
<p><b>12.</b> <b>11.2.14</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted and agreed, subject to the inclusion of the following items:-</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surplus - 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2014</li> <li>• Governor proposal - 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2014</li> <li>• School improvement high needs block - 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2014</li> </ul>	
<b>13. 11.2.14</b>	<p><b>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</b></p> <p>There were no late items submitted.</p>	
<b>14. 11.2.14</b>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>2014 - 15 Finance Regulations and Conditions of Grant for submitted pro-formas (Authority pro forma tool)</b></p> <p>A copy of an e-mail from the Education Funding Agency was circulated.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the e-mail dated 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 from the Education Funding Agency be noted.</p>	
<b>15. 11.2.14</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <p>It was <b>NOTED</b> that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.40 p.m.