

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 8th July, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chair)
Dr. A. Bruton (Vice-Chair)
Mrs. M. Sheehy
S. Davies
Mrs. J. Ward
Ms. M. Yates
Mrs. M. Woodcock
Mr. M. Ison
Mr. S. Pritchard-Jones
Councillor Arif
Mr. A. Orlik
Mr. R. Bragger

In Attendance:- Mrs. L. Poole - Assistant Director, Children's Services, Walsall MBC
Mr. D. Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Mrs. D. Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Mrs. C. Boughton - Children's Services, Walsall MBC

		Action
1. 8.7.14	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. C. Draper, Mr. G. Crowther, Dame M. Brennan, Mrs. C. Fraser, Mr. B. Powell, Mr. Milovsorov, Mrs. G. Healy and Mrs. B. Westwood.	
2. 8.7.14	Minutes - 8th April, 2014	The minutes of the meeting held on 8 th April, 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
3. 8.7.14	Matters arising from the minutes With regard to item 4, Walsall Association of Governors, Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the Secretary of State had now confirmed that he had no objection to the Walsall Association of Governors receiving £10,000 to spend as a one-off for the project to set up the Association.	

4. 8.7.14	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chair</p> <p>The Chairman agreed to a late item being submitted as a matter of urgency in relation to work required to take place before the start of the new academic year.</p>	
5. 8.7.14	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That an item of correspondence be considered in the private session in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) and at the relevant point in the meeting, the public and observers be excluded from the meeting.</p>	
6. 8.7.14	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chair</p> <p>Christchurch Primary School - contingency</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the request for funding from the contingency was an item for Schools Forum to determine.</p> <p>The Forum was advised that there were capacity pressures in that area and the request related to an increase in reception numbers from 30 to 45 which would require an additional reception class.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum approve the allocation of £19,000 from contingency funds to Christchurch C.E. JMI School in order that an additional reception class can be staffed from September 2014.</p>	

<p>7. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Schools Forum Dates and Extended Forward Plan</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be received and Schools Forum endorse the meeting plan and extended forward plan and that the 9 December 2014 and 10 March, 2015 dates be set as provisional.</p>	
<p>8. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Annual Report of Schools Forum for the period 11th June, 2013 to 8th April, 2014</p> <p>The Annual report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum note the Annual Report covering the work of the Forum for the period 11th June, 2013 to 8th April, 2014.</p>	
<p>9. 8.7.14</p>	<p>School Balances</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Schools Forum was informed that uncommitted balances were measured against the balance control mechanism and although there was no longer a legal requirement to have a balance control mechanism in place, it did prove useful in these instances. After discussion, it was:-</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	
<p>10. 8.7.14</p>	<p>SEN Review</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Members expressed concern that due to the insufficient number of SEN places, there were pupils in both the primary and secondary sectors whose needs were not being met and this impacted</p>	

	<p>on other pupils in the schools. They also asked whether there would be any interim measures whilst the review was taking place.</p> <p>Mr. Bragger stated that some staff were in talks with their unions due to their concerns over pupil numbers, this could impact on Walsall.</p> <p>Mrs Morris confirmed regular meetings have taken place with special head teachers over the last 12 months which included discussions in regard to the number of places to be commissioned from special schools in 2014-15. Mrs Morris confirmed that in December 2013 the DfE notified all local authorities of the number of high needs places it would support in the 2014-15 year and for Walsall this was a maximum of 914, pre and post 16.</p> <p>Discussions took place to agree how these places should be distributed given many are already taken up by specific pupils and that the number of high needs post 16 pupils showed a marked increase over 2013-14, so much so that the number of available pre 16 HN places has been reduced by 40 to meet the increase post 16 HN places.</p> <p>Special school places account for 2/3rds of the 914 places available and tension on places needed elsewhere in the authority in Additionally Resourced Provision, PRU's and Independent Specialist provision has limited the LAs ability to make more places available in special schools.</p> <p>Members discussed the possibility of setting up a working group of special and mainstream head teachers and teachers of additionally resourced provision, including Karen Grandison, to consider this matter and report back to the next meeting of the Forum.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole informed the Forum that an 'inclusion strategy' was being discussed with head teachers and governors; consultation would include recommendations and would be referred to Council and Schools Forum in view of the financial implications and possible policy changes.</p>	
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	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum note the contents of the report;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum note that the financial implications of the SEN Review will be the subject of a further report in the Autumn term.</p>	
<p>11. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Schools Admissions Funding</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys outlined the contents of the report and referred to the shortfall in the actual cost of the admissions service which had arisen as a result of the service reverting to the Local Authority from Serco. The shortfall would require an increase to the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Forum was advised that any increase to DSG would enable the service to be retained in its current form.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That officers submit a report to WASH and Primary Forum setting out the statutory requirements and costings as well as the additional requirements and costings of the Schools Admissions Service and that their comments be submitted to Schools Forum as soon as possible.</p>	
<p>12. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Early Years Funding 2015-16</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum note the contents of the report.</p>	
<p>13. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Pupil premium in respect of Looked After Children</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Boughton drew the Forum's attention to the principal changes to the pupil premium for looked</p>	

	<p>after children as set out in the annexed report which linked the pupil premium to progress and attainments for the looked after child. The personal education plan would identify how the premium would be spent to support the child in making progress and attainment. The local authority would retain £200 per child to cover functions that could be carried out collectively.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	
<p>14. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Schools Forum Membership</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum notes that no change in schools membership was required and no change in non-schools membership was proposed;</p> <p>(2) That membership of Schools Forum be reviewed in July 2015.</p>	
<p>15. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the forward plan of decisions be noted.</p>	
<p>16. 8.7.14</p>	<p>Private Session - Part II summary</p> <p>Exclusion of Public</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That, during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Forum considers that the item for consideration is exempt information in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 and</p>	

	accordingly resolves to consider that item in private. Accordingly, the observers and staff present left the meeting.	
17. 8.7.14	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>The Chairman read out a letter that he had received from the Head Teacher of Whetstone Field Primary School together with the reply from Walsall Council regarding the provision of meals for all KS1 pupils. The Forum requested that an investigation into this matter be carried out.</p>	
18. 8.7.14	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>It was NOTED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 23rd September, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.25 p.m.