



SCHOOLS FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an annual report of the work of the Forum covering the period 7 July, 2015 to 8 March, 2016.

2.0 School ready and early help in Walsall

7.7.15

Schools Forum noted the outcomes of the consultation and progress on the integrated strategy for children aged 0-5 years.

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rolled

22.9.15

Schools Forum received information on the project which was being out in Darlaston which brought other agencies together. An evidence based training programme would be delivered to the Early Help workforce to equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and tools to address the top demands through a single agency response where appropriate. The scope of the Funding from DSG School Ready would be extended to the wider Early Help Agenda. Success measures would be monitored.

2.2

8.12.15

Schools Forum agreed an amended outcomes framework confirming how

success would be measured as a result of the investment into Early Help demonstrating the impact on children, young people and school performance.

3.0

7.7.15

SEN update – Review

Schools Forum has received a report to every meeting on the progress of the SEN review. Discussions had taken place with Phoenix School and it had been indicated that Shepwell School would be expanded to cater for Walsall's needs with the addition of a 20 place ASD unit.

22.9.16

A working group was established to look at a strategy for SEND to work with primary and secondary schools. A Conference was proposed for February 2016 on the Strategy for SEND and the Inclusion Strategy. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of autistic

children who entered nursery in the previous year and that reception would require specialist provision.

- 13.10.15 An action plan was being drawn up and discussions taking place with heads and chairs of governors of special schools. The cost of the service

was required to be addressed and it was necessary for the service to change and deliver better outcomes across the board at a lower cost. The issue of out of borough children attending Walsall schools was being looked into as was Walsall children on out of borough placements.

- 8.12.15 Shepwell Green short stay was catering more for pupils on the autistic spectrum, the facility was working well with the families involved. Schools Forum expressed concern that there were no MLD special school places for nursery or key stage 1 children despite there being a need for such provision.

- 12.1.16 Work was still ongoing and profiling taking place with regard to out of borough placements; the philosophy of the Council was to keep children in the Borough.

- 8.3.16 Schools Forum was informed of the difficulties which had been experienced in meeting the time lines for completion of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). There would be greater pressure on the more complex statements as well as statements that had not undergone a review for at least six months. Work was on going with the psychology service with a view to enhancing their opportunity to offer a broader service to schools.

An assurance was given that evidence contained in the school's Education Plan would also be considered as part of the SEND evidence. Members were concerned that progress in increasing provision for very vulnerable children was being hindered due to a lack of data. There were also concerns that staff at special schools were underutilised when there was a need for expertise within main stream schools.

Approximately 20 additional SEN places had now been provided and the Shepwell Centre had developed work with autistic children and provided 10 additional places.

4.0 **Dedicated Schools Grant**

7.7.15

Schools Forum noted the unallocated surplus of the 2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant.

- 5.0
7.7.15 **Schools Forum Membership**
- Schools Forum noted that no changes were required in schools and non-schools membership this year.
- 6.0
7.7.15 **Creating free education for eligible 2 year olds**
- Schools Forum agreed the process for the allocation of '2 year old capital and revenue' to ensure economic, efficient and effective use of funding and safeguarded the local authority's assets and interests in respect of the allocation of education for eligible 2 year olds. Additional support was provided for the 2015/16 academic year only.
- 7.0
7.7.15 **Induction Pack for Schools Forum Members**
- Schools Forum agreed to the introduction of an induction pack for new members.
- 8.0
7.7.15 **Free School Meal Support – Increase take up option**
- The results of a pilot scheme developed in conjunction with Short Heath Junior and Rosedale Infants Schools which operated as a Federation were received which provided a service to meet the schools needs. This included information to increase the take up of free school meals which would also increase pupil premium. Collaborative working with Walsall Council would continue in order to maximise free school meal take up, pupil premium and to ensure pupils continued to get support when needed.
- 9.0
7.7.15 **Scheme for Financing Schools – DfE proposed directed revisions**
- New funding arrangements introduced in April 2013 included a requirement for local authorities to simplify the funding formula used to allocate funds to their schools. Modelling work for the new formula would be taking place with the working group.
- 9.1
Scheme
22.9.15 Schools Forum noted that the directed revisions by the DfE to the for financing schools had been agreed.
- 10.0
7.7.15 **Future process for Properly Assigned sums**
- Schools Forum approved the process for the submission of Properly Assigned Sums which required schools to submit their requests by

February half term to enable approval, or otherwise, in order that the local authority could confirm them before the end of the spring term. Surplus balances would remain at 8% for 2015/16 balances.

11.0
7.7.15

Update on Early Years funding review

Schools Forum noted that two meetings of the working group to review the funding had been held; the deprivation factor would continue to be based on the post codes of children in each setting during the summer term prior to the beginning of the financial year. The working group wanted to ensure that any cost model would over-fund the private, voluntary and independent providers.

11.1
and
8.12.15

It was agreed that the current early years single funding formula model funding rates for 2016/17 be retained for all schools and private and voluntary providers.

12.0
7.7.15

Review of schools funding formula for primary and secondary Schools

Schools Forum noted that a working group to review funding had been set up and that the DfE was encouraging local authorities to increase funding to the secondary sector where their ratio was below 1:1.27.

13.0
22.9.15

Application for continuation of music funding for 2016/17

Schools Forum agreed to continue funding the Music Service, Forest Arts Centre in 2016/17.

14.0
22.9.15

Review of Schools Funding formula for mainstream schools and academies for 2016/17

Schools Forum noted that the review focused on deprivation aspects of the formula and increased funding in age weighted pupil unit (AWPU); concern had been expressed that some pupils could fall within the deprivation funding based on free school meals and IDACI and also be eligible for pupil premium meaning that schools could receive two lots of deprivation funding.

Schools Forum agreed that the factors utilised within the local funding formula for mainstream schools and academies within Walsall for 2016/17 remain unchanged from those currently in place.

15.0
13.10.15

Maintained Schools De-delegation 2016/17

The maintained primary and secondary school representatives on Schools Forum voted on a number of services they wished the Council to provide on their behalf at appropriate costs.

16.0
13.10.15

Update on Universal Infant Free School Meals funding

The current position regarding funding for the provision of universal infant free school meals was noted and requests for funding previously approved by the working group were approved. Further requests to utilise the remaining funding would be delegated to the working group.

17.0
8.12.15

School Balances – 2014/15 outturn

Schools Forum noted that balances held by maintained schools would only be reported at sector level from 2015/16 onwards rather than at an individual school basis.

18.0
8.12.15

Approval of Central Expenditure Budgets for 2016/17

Schools

Schools Forum has approved funding for Central Services, Central Expenditure and Central Early Years Expenditure for the 2016/17 financial year.

19.0
8.12.15

Council's approach to using Section 106 money

Schools Forum agreed to refer the report on Section 106 money to WASH and PNS for comments. It was estimated that there would be an increase in pupil numbers in the future and migration and refugees would need to be factored in.

20.0
12.1.16

Admissions Service update

Schools Forum received a report on the functions of the Admissions Service; the additional funding agreed by the Forum had enabled the team to fulfil the admissions role traditionally performed and documents were being produced to aid transparency for colleagues and schools on the availability of places at schools. Academies were reminded of their

statutory duty to provide information on pupil numbers as well as the number of admission applications received.

21.0 **Final Schools funding formula for 2016/17**

12.1.16

Schools Forum approved the final schools funding formula for 2016/17 which increased the AWPU funding factor values as much as possible to ensure that all Schools Block funding that was available was allocated to schools as soon as possible to help offset pressures that they were experiencing in superannuation and national insurance rates, alongside the implementation of a national living wage from April 2016. As a result of this there would be no surplus balance available in the Schools Block to help smooth any future impact of the implementation of a national fair funding formula.

22.0 **High Needs Rates 2016/17**

12.1.16

Schools Forum has noted the continued use of the 'place plus' funding model in high needs settings and that a revision of the cost model for high needs places in Additionally Resourced Provision had taken place. It was also noted that the change in top-up funding arrangements to short term provision commissioned by schools and academies at the Shepwell Centre Medical PRU would be met from delegated budget shares.

23.0 **Ofsted Inspection of the Local Authority – Feedback**

8.3.16

Schools Forum received feedback from the Director of Children's Services on the recent inspection of the Local Authority by Ofsted which took place over a two week period. The Director of Children's Services thanked the members of Schools Forum who had been involved in the process.

24.0 **Living Wage**

8.3.16

Schools Forum noted the decision of Appointments Board on 20 January, 2016 which agreed that the Council continued to pay a living wage supplement to existing roles (and casual roles) that were below the living wage which meant the minimum rate of pay would be £8.25 per hour with

effect from 1 April, 2016 for 12 months after which would be reviewed again by Members. This included schools but excluded Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies. A number of Voluntary Aided schools had adopted the national living wage.

25.0 **High needs top-up rates 2016/17 and revised permanent exclusion**

8.3.16

rates

Schools Forum noted the top-up funding rates for mainstream and special schools and academies as well as additionally resourced provision; a change in the funding arrangements for New Leaf and Shepwell alternative provision had resulted in anticipated rates being submitted subject to confirmation. The revised permanent exclusion rates for 2016/17 were noted as follows:-

Primary school/academies exclusion rate - £5949

Secondary School/Academies exclusion rate - £7831.

26.0

8.3.16

Traded Services

Schools Forum noted that order forms for a wide portfolio of traded services were available from the website.

27.0

8.3.16

Behaviour support service – monitoring

Schools Forum noted the new look Integrated Behaviour Support Service which had been supporting maintained primary schools since September 2014. The team was made up of specialist teachers, clinical nurse specialists (seconded from CAMHS) and integrated behaviour support workers.

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