

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 26th March, 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chairman)
Mrs. M. Sheehy
Mr. G. Thornton
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Ms. H. Lomas
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mr. B. Powell
Mr. J. Murray
Mr. R. Bragger
Ms. H. Harnisch

In Attendance:- Mr. D. Mortiboys - Walsall MBC
Ms. D. Morris - Walsall MBC

		Action
	At 4.00 p.m. the meeting was inquorate and the Chairman agreed that the start time of the meeting be delayed for 30 minutes to enable a Member, who would be late, to get to the meeting.	
1. 26.3.13	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. C. Draper, Mr. G. Crowther, Mrs. J. Ward, Mrs. M. Yates, Mr. T. Perrett, Mr. M. Ison, Mr. A. Orlik, Ms. P. Hunt, Dame M. Brennan and Mr. E. Gee. Ms. Hunt had also tendered her resignation from the Forum with immediate effect.	
2. 26.3.13	Minutes - 12th March, 2013	The minutes of the meeting held on 12 th March, 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:-

		Page 3 - Paragraph 5, delete “early retirement” and insert “premature retirement”.
3. 26.3.13	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>The attention of Members was drawn to the report to the 12th March, 2013 meeting on “High Needs - Top-up rates 2013-14”, Appendix 2, and was advised that the figures included in “SLD b and S5 columns 6 and 9”, should read “£28,803 per pupil full year” and “total funding per pupil per year”.</p> <p>Ms. Morris confirmed that she would forward the details to special schools.</p>	
4. 26.3.13	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>There were no late items for introduction by the Chairman.</p>	
5. 26.3.13	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>The Forum noted that there were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
6. 26.3.13	<p>Balance Control Mechanism</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum agree to the proposal of an 8% threshold for the Balance Control Mechanism;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum agree that the revised mechanism shall apply to 2012/13 year end balances onwards.</p>	

<p>7. 26.3.13</p>	<p>High Needs - top up rates 2013/14</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris outlined the information contained in the report and informed the Forum that a service level agreement was in the process of being prepared in respect of alternative provision at Phoenix Special School.</p> <p>It was proposed to submit a report to the June meeting of the Forum regarding consultation on reviewing the matrix for special schools and exploring best practice across other Local Authorities. Consideration could be given to the establishment of a Working Group consisting of Head Teachers, Health and Social Services to assist with the review.</p> <p>Mr. Thornton referred to the need for a review as the figure for physical and medical places appeared to be particularly low.</p> <p>After consideration it was</p> <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That the Forum note the type and number of Additionally Resourced Provision places to be commissioned by the Local Authority in 2013-14; (2) That the Forum endorse the proposed top-up rates for Additionally Resourced Provision/Units in mainstream schools, academies and special schools; (3) That the review of the funding basis of all high need place provision during 2013-14 be noted; (4) That the progress toward delegated budgets for Alternative Provision - PRUs be noted; 	
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	<p>(5) That the circumstances under which the Local Authority, schools and Academies, as commissioners, will make payments of top-up funding for provision made at Phoenix and PRUs be noted.</p>	
<p>8. 26.3.13</p>	<p>(a) Teachers redundancies and premature retirement</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>(b) Scheme for Financing Schools</p> <p>A report was submitted and Mr. Mortiboys circulated a copy of the Policy agreed in 2010 which included a discretionary power for the Local Authority to decide whether a teacher can take premature retirement or not. The Policy was agreed by Appointments Board following consultation with schools JNC. The reason the policy was introduced was to avoid discrimination claims, not pay equality claims. Changes to the policy would need to go through consultation with schools and JNC. Mrs. Ensor outlined the process for Appointments Board.</p> <p>Members discussed the issues relating to the premature retirement of teachers at maintained schools and their relationship with the Council. Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that if no agreement on the Scheme for Financing Schools was reached by Schools Forum, the matter would be referred to the Secretary of State for adjudication. Mr. Bragger stated that issues could arise in terms of equality as two different schools could have different outcomes from the same employer. The Chairman stated that there was no equality issue between voluntary aided schools and Academies but considered that there should be a partnership between the Council and schools, however, with regard to premature retirement, the governing body of the schools should be included in the process.</p> <p>Mr. Clarke referred to issues that could be created in a redundancy situation and a teacher aged 55 or over applying for premature retirement.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that a decision was required on the Scheme for Financing Schools and confirmed that schools would pay the sum resulting</p>	

	<p>from the premature retirement. If the situation resulted in a school's balances going into deficit, additional pressure could be put on the Council with a view to the Council paying the costs. The scheme for financing schools had moved to the Department for Education default position.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the revised Scheme for Financing Schools attached to the annexed report be approved;</p> <p>(2) That discussions take place between Mr. G. Crowther, Mrs. M. Sheehy and Ms. L. Hughes, together with consultations taking place with the appropriate Trade Unions on increasing the premature retirement age for teachers from 55 to 58 years of age and that a report on the outcome be submitted to Appointments Board for approval;</p> <p>(3) That a report be submitted to the 11th June, 2013 meeting of the Forum on teachers redundancies and premature retirement following the consultations and decision of the Appointments Board.</p>	
<p>9. 26.3.13</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forward Plan be agreed.</p>	
<p>10. 26.3.13</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>The Forum was informed that this would be Heather Lomas's last meeting.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That a vote of thanks be given to Heather Lomas for her service on Schools Forum.</p>	

<p>11. 26.3.13</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence received.</p>	
<p>12. 26.3.13</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>It was NOTED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 11th June, 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.15 p.m.