

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2007

Present:

Primary School Teachers:	Doreen, Fellingham, Ron Lawrence, Sue Meckiff and Sue Robertson
Secondary Head Teachers:	Kathleen Clark, Meryl Davies, Kathy Griffiths and Karen Raven
Primary Governors:	Paul Chick and Betsy Johnstone
Secondary Governors:	Andrew Downes (Chairman) and Janet Bell
Non-School Representatives	David Bridger (Vice Chairman) and Alison Regester
Special Head Teacher/Governor	Steve Gillow

Also present

George Searle (Assistant Director Children and Young People)
Merril Haeusler (Head of School Improvement)
Rob Carling (Head of Children & Young People Finance)
Mandy Russell (Children & Young People Finance Group)
Helen Long (Democratic Services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Nick Webb, Tony Corkett and Natalie Cummings.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2007

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2007 were agreed subject to the following amendments:-

Minute 6 – 2nd paragraph, 2nd line after – “some schools may have difficulties...”

Change the resolution to read “**RESOLVED that the matters concerning the extended schools be deferred until the next meeting when a further report will be considered**”.

Minute 7 – change the resolution to read “**RESOLVED that:**

- (1) the principle of an enlarged contingency, subject to consideration of the early years issues and the proposal for £30,000, for support with behavioural issues, based on further information to confirm the service levels are correct and benefit the whole school community be agreed; and**

(2) The Forum also agreed in principle to the breaching of the central limit for 2007/08

Minute 8 - 4th Paragraph – change to read “the report demonstrated.....”

- 6th Paragraph – last line- change to read “to pay staff at the same rate of increase”

Minute 9 – 3rd paragraph – change to read “some members of the Forum were unhappy with the changes”

3 ADJUSTMENTS TO MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE LEVELS FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS DCYP07047

Members of the Forum considered the proposed changes to individual schools Minimum Funding Guarantee calculations for 2007/08. The Schools' Forum had the statutory power to amend the MFG calculation for up to 20% of all schools in any one year.

Officers had submitted a report which listed 18 schools for which the MFG needed to be adjusted both upwards and downwards for a variety of reasons. They also added an additional school where the need to adjust the MFG had only just come to light:

1.	Burnt Ash Primary - MFG reduced by £8,000 (full year £20,000) re Regulation 28 adjustment as previously agreed by Schools' Forum.
2.	Grays Farm Primary - MFG reduced by £29,00 to remove Infant class size funding paid in 2006/07
3.	Unicorn – funding reviewed on request of SF. MFG to be reduced by £194,720 to bring 07/08 funding in line with 06/07 funding and to be held at 05/06 cash level until formula funding catches up with MFG. Funding based on 05/06 level plus cost of additional teacher for 7 months.
4.	Castlecombe Primary - £26,000 to be deducted each year for 3 years to address previous over-funding in the Nursery provision. Agreed with Head Teacher.
5.	Bishop Justus – MFG reduced by £600,000. Agreed with HT and Bursar.
6.	Bullers Wood – MFG reduced by £4,670 in 2007/08 to bring funding in line with 11-16 MFG + 6 th form funding. Previously agreed with HT.
7.	Kemnal - MFG reduced by £13,364 to bring funding in line with 11-16

	MFG + 6 th form funding.
8.	Langley Park Boys – MFG reduced by £97,186 in £4,528 in 2007/08 to bring funding in line with 11-16 MFG + 6 th form funding. Previously agreed with HT.
9.	Langley Park Girls - MFG reduced by £7,938 in 2007/08 to bring funding in line with 11-16 MFG + 6 th form funding. Previously agreed with HT.
10.	The Priory - MFG reduced by £10,068 to bring funding in line with 11-16 MFG + 6 th form funding.
11.	All Saints – Additional funding of £200,000 to be added to MFG as identified in previous report on DSG.
12.	Riverside Special School – Additional funding to support costs for the running of the new school for the period April to August.
13.	Tubbenden Junior School - £47,500 reduction in 06/07 relating to regulation 28 payments.

With regard to item 13 Forum members wanted to ensure that, although there was very little time, the Head Teacher was consulted on the proposal. Due to the time constraints it was agreed that discussions would take place with the Head Teacher and then the Chairman and Vice-chairman would have delegated authority to agree the change.

The Forum also wanted, for the next meeting, the final MFG figures for consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantees as detailed above are agreed; and**
- (2) that agreement for Tubbenden Junior school be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman following discussions with the Head Teacher.**

Kathy Griffiths and David Bridger declared an interest in point 5 as the respective Head Teacher and Chair of Governors of Bishop Justus School.

**4 ACTION PLUS FUNDING FOR 2007/08
DCYP07046**

In March 2006 the Schools' Finance Team identified some problems with the pupil numbers for School Action and Action Plus, which resulted in the 2006/07 school budget shares being calculated on the 2005/06 audited pupil data.

The Schools' Forum expressed some concern that the 2006/07 budget allocations did not necessarily reflect the changing needs of individual schools. It was therefore agreed that the funding for 2007/08 would be based on the January 2007 school census figures, following a full moderation exercise having been carried out in November/December.

Schools were advised of this proposal by Circular 001/07 in January this year and at that time it was anticipated that the pupil numbers were decreasing. However, when the pupil information was extracted from census forms in February, it became apparent that the numbers had once again increased. Initial calculations showed that there was insufficient funding available to fund these pupils at the same levels as in previous years, with the funding shortfall being over £435k. Had this have been identified earlier, other alternatives could have been explored, such as using the headroom to fund this increase. However, at this late stage the suggested option is to reduce the funding, and as there has always been a correlation between the funding for Action Plus and Matrix Level 3, it is proposed that the biggest reduction be made to Action funding.

The Forum were very concerned that the situation had occurred again and that since the census some of the schools had seen a considerable increase in pupils on action and action plus.

They noted that moderation had taken place in the autumn but felt unhappy about the moderation process and requested a report to be brought to the next meeting.

They felt that the figures needed to be reviewed particularly those with the biggest fluctuations. They debated how the money would be paid to schools and whether it could be pro-rated. They also wanted to establish that if needed it could be "clawed back".

In conclusion they reluctantly agreed that the 07/08 figures for action/action plus be used but with the proviso that the funding could be "clawed back" and that a report on the methods of moderation be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposed levels of funding for Action/Action Plus, as a result of the increased numbers returned by the schools be agreed; and**
- (2) A report on the methods for moderation be brought to a future meeting of the Schools' Forum.**

5 **TRANSITION FUNDING – VERBAL UPDATE**

Transition funding had been the subject of a report at the previous Forum meeting. At that meeting members of the forum had noted that consultation had taken place with staff but felt that users of the service; Secondary and Primary Head Teachers and Parents, should be consulted. They also wanted a further report which would outline the role of the School's Forum in the process and would clarify concerns regarding the London Challenge funding and establish the best way forward for the provision of the funding.

They were given a verbal update by the Head of School Improvement. It was explained that there would be an action plan which would show the types of activities the schools were offering.

Each primary school would receive £1000 and the secondary schools would receive £8000 each.

The Forum wanted it to be made clear to schools, by way of a letter that this would be the last year of funding and that the funding needed to be spent by August this year.

6 **MUSIC SERVICES STANDARDS FUND GRANT - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Assistant Director gave a verbal update on the situation regarding the music services standards fund grant.

Schools had been consulted on the two proposals which the Schools Forum had considered at its meeting in December;

- to devolve the funding to primary, junior and special schools according to the number of Key Stage 2 pupils, calculated on a formula of £50 per school + £11 per Key Stage 2 pupil.
- target schools in low socio-economic areas or with history of low engagement in instrumental and vocal tuition. Focussing upon specialist teaching, in depth instrumental music across a range of instruments to encourage children to develop skills and choose to continue study taking advantage of the BYMT contract requirement to target some of its work at children from areas of high deprivation using fee remission.

The schools had been consulted; 29 replied and of these 22 preferred option one, devolved funding.

- **RESOLVED that it be agreed to devolve the funding to primary, junior and special schools according to the number of Key Stage 2 pupils, calculated on a formula of £50 per school + £11 per Key Stage 2 pupil.**

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that he had received a second letter from Karen Raven, Vice Chair of the Secondary Heads group, relating to financial issues in the Pupil Referral Units.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Schools Forum would be held on at 4.30pm on Tuesday 22nd May 2007 at the Civic Centre. However this is the same evening as the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder meeting so it would need to be changed to **Monday 21st May at 4.30pm.**

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 6.30 pm.