

SCHOOLS FORUM
Thursday 9th May 2019

Room 0012, Badminton Road Offices, Yate, BS37 5AF

PRESENT:

Dave Baker (Chair)	CEO, Olympus Academy Trust
Nicky Edwards	Natural Choice Nurseries
Mark Freeman	Headteacher, St Michael's Primary School
Clare Haughton	Page Park Preschool
Sarah Lovell	Finance Director, Cabot Learning Federation
Pippa Osborne	Headteacher, Christ Church Junior School
Diane Owen	Chair, Kings Oak Academy
Lisa Parker	Headteacher, Warmley Park
Will Roberts	CEO, CSET
Bernice Webber-Brown	Headteacher, Old Sodbury School

Officers:

Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Learning and Skills
Duane Chappell, Strategic Lead 0-25
Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner – CAH Children
Management Accounts
Justine Poulton, Audit Manager
Stuart Thomas, SEND Financial Planning Lead

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jo Dent, Matthew Cottrell, Kim Garland, Keith Lawrence, Louise Leader, Jim Lott, Trevor Jones, Lisa Parker, Mustafa Salih, Susie Weaver

3. EVACUATION PROCESS

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure

4. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2019

Tortworth Primary School, Financial Support Request

Action: Will Roberts visiting Tortworth School on Friday 10th May 2019.

Olveston Primary School, Financial Support Request

Will Roberts visited the school. The school felt frustrated and upset that they were not notified of the outcome of the Schools Forum decision. A more constructive meeting was around the contingency and about how we allocate the money whenever a school requested additional funding.

The school has lost 6 months of work on the implementation they had to do. One of the actions was to design a proforma and to meet with the Headteacher and Business Managers to know what the issues are. They are probably looking to borrow money and also some support with implementation.

Will Roberts said the whole process of the contingency plan needs re-thinking and if the the contingency plan is that small then why have it at all.

Action:

Dave Baker said the Forum would note the outcome of the visit by Will Roberts and to go back to see the bigger picture.

Schools Forum to look at the contingency; is it fit for purpose and how the schools can approach the process?

The remainder of the Minutes were accepted as a true record.

6. UPDATE OF SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Stuart Thomas presented this item and highlighted the current vacancies that need filling. Procedures are in place to have these vacancies filled by the 3rd June. Members were asked to look at the new Constitution and this was approved.

Agreed: Approved

7. HIGH NEEDS WORKING GROUP

A letter providing an update on the work of the High Needs Working Group (HNWG), which was formed following feedback from the recent Schools Budget Consultation, was approved by the Forum and will be sent to all Headteachers and Chairs of Governors.

Agreed: Approved

8. NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE

The National Audit Office visited South Gloucestershire on 1st April 2019. This visit was part of a small number of visits to local authorities for their value for money examination on supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Following this visit with key stakeholders they have written back and said that the variation between the LAs are all telling the same story, e.g. same picture throughout England.

The key issues were what are the challenges around the SEND budget. We are the lowest funded authority with a growing deficit of approximately £3m, which is not much different nationally. The demand for EHCPs are really high and the Children and Families Act bar is set too low.

They took on board the issues we have and asked “when do you think you will hit crisis point and when will you know”; Duane Chappell said I think we have hit crisis point.

Dave Baker, who was part of the stakeholder group, felt the meeting was objective and constructive.

The findings from this NAO review will be reported to the Government who will then publish its own report which is anticipated to be September 2019.

Action: Duane to share the report around September time.

9. **DSG RECOVERY PLAN**

The agreed actions on the DSG Recovery plan for Schools Forum approval were:-

- 1) Documents to be e-mailed to Schools Forum Members last week of term (week commencing 20th May 2019)
- 2) Schools Forum Members to attend a short meeting after the High Needs Working Group meeting on 5th June to review and approve the DSG recovery plan
- 3) If Schools Forum do not approve / agree with the recovery plan an additional Schools Forum meeting will be needed in June 2019.

10. **FINALISED VERSION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

Justine Poulton attended for this item. This is the 2nd report brought to Schools Forum, the first one at the end of November last year. Headteachers and Governors of maintained schools were invited to comment on the consultation which closed on 30th January 2019 and the Forum is being asked to acknowledge the consultation and the implementation of the Financial Regulations and for schools using them. The Regulations apply only to maintained schools, not academies or early years.

Action: Approved.

11. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO SCHEME FOR FINANCING OF SCHOOLS

This paper updates our Scheme for Financing Schools following some very minor Directed Changes from the DfE.

The Forum is being asked to give its views on the proposed Scheme changes.

Agreed: No comments received - Approved.

12. APPROVAL OF FUTURE FORUM DATES 2019/2020

Agreed.

13. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

Possible High Needs Working Group meeting on 5th June between 1.30 and 2.00pm in Room 0012 to approve the DSG Recovery Plan. It was agreed that the final DSG Recovery Plan would be sent out well in advance of the HNWG meeting on the 5th June.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum raised concerns about not receiving papers consistently 7 days before Forum meetings.

The election process of members was discussed, including the Chair.

The professionalism of the Forum was also discussed and is being addressed.

A minimum of 4 meetings per year is required.