



# City of Westminster

## Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 4.45pm at  
The Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's St. London SW1P 2DE

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>6 Members</b>		
Primary Headteacher	Lee Duffy (LD)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary	Present
Primary Headteacher	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
Executive Headteacher	Alix Ascough (AA)	All Souls CE Primary/Soho Parish Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) <b>(Chair)</b>	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	<b>VACANT</b>		
Primary Governor	Simon Mair (SM)	Edward Wilson Primary	Apologies
<b>Secondary schools</b>	<b>1 Member</b>		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's CE High School	Present
<b>Academies</b>	<b>6 Members</b>		
Secondary Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Apologies
Director of Finance and Administration	<b>Represented by: John McDonald (JMc)</b>	The St Marylebone CE School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Peter Broughton (PB)	Westminster City School	Apologies
School Business Manager	<b>Represented by: David Everett (DE)</b>	Westminster City Hall	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Susanne Staab (SS)	The Greycoat Hospital School	Present
Secondary Academy Proprietor	Paul Wood (PW)	Westminster Academy	Present
Primary Academy Head	Claire Cleary (CC)	Gateway Academy	Present
Alternative Provision Academy Principal	Michelle Burgess-Allen (MBA)	Ormiston Beachcroft	Present
<b>Maintained Nursery Schools</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Nursery Head	Liz Hillyard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery School	Apologies
<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Executive Headteacher	Noel Gibb (NG)	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Absent
Headteacher	<b>Represented by Claire Shepherd (CS)</b>	Westminster Special Schools Federation/QEII Special School	Apologies
<b>Early Years (PVI)</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
PVI	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
<b>14-19 Representative</b>	<b>1 member</b>		
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School	Present
<b>Advisers</b>			
<b>Officers in Attendance</b>			
Executive Director of Children's Services	Sarah Newman (SN)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Apologies
Director of Education	Ian Heggs (IH)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Deputy Director of Education	Shelley Duffy (SD)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present

Assistant Director – SEN & Educational Psychology	Julie Ely (JE)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services	Present
Head of Admissions and Access to Education	Wendy Anthony (WA)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services	Present
Lead Strategic Finance Manager	Anita Stokes (ASt)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Senior Finance Manager	Poonam Gagda (PG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Finance Manager School Deficits	Estera Wojcik (EW)	Bi-Borough Finance - Children’s	Present
Finance Manager Capital and School Budgets	Rahul Ganatra (RG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Head of Early Years and Childcare/Interim Principal Lead Adviser	Iraklis Kolokotronis (IK)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
Senior School Governance Adviser/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
<b>Observers</b>			
Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning	Cllr Tim Roca (TR)	Councillor	Apologies
Primary Academy Head	Lisa Breslin (LB)	Gateway Academy	Present

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies were sent by Sarah Newman, Cllr Roca, Richard Ardron, Peter Broughton, Simon Mair, Liz Hillyard and Claire Shepherd.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Andrew Garwood-Watkins declared that he was the Operations Director for the LDBS. There were no other declarations of interest.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>  JS reported that Susanne Staab (The Greycoat Hospital School) had been re-nominated as the Secondary Academy Principal representative. Her new term of office was 18 /1/24 – 17/1/26.  JS reported that Carol Foyle, Chair of governors of Queens Park Federation, had expressed interest in in the Primary Governor vacancy and she would be speaking to her later in the week to advise on the role. She was not available to attend this meeting.  Wasim Butt’s term of office finished on 1 December 2023. Michelle Burgess-Allen was the new representative for the Alternative Provision Academy position with effect from 2 December 2023.	
	<b>RESOLUTION: Noted.</b>	

4.	<p><b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were approved.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were approved.</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION: Noted.</b></p>	
6.	<p><b>DSG MONITORING 2023/24 AND ESTIMATED SCHOOL BALANCES</b></p> <p>ASt presented the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She outlined the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for 2023/24 as shown at point 1.1 of the report. Table 1 showed the updated DSG allocation as reported in November 2023 compared to the March 2023 position.</p> <p>The High Needs budget variances at 3.8 to 3.17 were highlighted, noting independent sector placements are forecast to underspend by £124k and the costs for the independent sector and out of borough placements are subject to further review.</p> <p>ASt reported that there was an increasing trend in respect of the number of schools in deficit, along with the sizes of the deficit. Six schools currently have a licenced deficit plan and another six schools are forecasting deficits for March 2024. Four schools are forecasting deficits for the first time and are working on deficit plans. The deficit for St Stephens which closed, will sit with the LA.</p> <p>ASt explained that Westminster had been given £0.290m additional funding for schools in financial difficulty in 2023/24. It is proposed to allocate this fund to support schools that might potentially amalgamate before September 2025. Further information will be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>ASt was asked why the December forecast top ups post 16 was up £1.2m or 40%. She explained this was due to timing; when the January budget is set, the outturn is not known. Therefore, it is better to compare the outturn for 2023/24 and look at the budget. JE agreed highlighting that some individual costs make the total costs higher.</p> <p>AA asked what was being done to challenge schools that can't set a balanced budget. IH explained that the Isos working group had recommended that schools in this position should be supported. Estera Wojcik had been employed by the LA with the specific remit of supporting, challenging and advising schools in deficit or heading</p>	

	<p>towards a deficit. The LA insists schools repay any deficit within three years, although where good progress was being made this has been extended in some cases. The LA, or Diocese, will instruct schools to review their plan where they are not happy with the proposed plan. Ultimately, if a Headteacher is unable to set a balanced budget and standards drop, the LA can take steps to address this, although this is not the LAs current position.</p> <p>ASt reminded members that the LA can withdraw a school’s delegated budget but that is not something the LA is proposing for any schools.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) To note the revised 2023/24 DSG allocation of £95.334m and forecast underspend of £0.150m.</b></li> <li><b>ii) To note the projected year end school balances.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING PROJECTIONS</b></p> <p>IH opened the item reporting that the Isos Working group had met the previous week, WSSIC and the Primary Heads had been informed of the data and current position and the EPB had also discussed the data.</p> <p>WA reminded members that this is the time of year that the annual projections are prepared, which in turn leads to the DfE agreeing basic needs allocations and reviewing the provision in place at each LA. The LA uses the GLA methodology, local scrutiny, admissions data and local intelligence to draw together the data.</p> <p>WA explained that there had been no change in numbers from the independent sector and promotions had been run in the past but with very little success.</p> <p>There are six planning areas in Westminster with an overall surplus in excess of 20%. Following the May census, surplus is now 26.6%, up from the previous figure of 25.7% although numbers generally increase in October. Growth in surplus is stabilised but the surplus across London is growing. If action had not previously been taken the surplus would have been around 30%. Fourteen (14FE) has already been removed by removing PANS and amalgamations being agreed and the Isos Working Group is reviewing this further.</p> <p><u>Secondary Sector</u></p> <p>WA reported that numbers were not falling in the same way as for primaries, as almost 50% of students attend from out of borough. Some secondary schools in other London boroughs, such as Lambeth, are closing. In all-boys schools there are insufficient boys available for the number of places, whilst there are insufficient spaces available for girls.</p>	

	<p><u>SEND</u></p> <p>JE informed members that the DfE is very interested in what boroughs are doing to address issues for SEND students. The LA is providing extra resource bases and additional satellite provision.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the surplus figures for October included the approximate figure of 100 pupils from St Stephens. WA confirmed they did not include pupils numbers from St Stephens.</p> <p>JTS asked for an update on the Pan London work that had previously been reported. WA stated that the last written report from the London Councils in January 2023 was available but was due to be updated.</p> <p>IH stated lobbying had taken place seeking additional funding like that given to rural schools. The DfE response to date had been that they can link schools/authorities with others who can help maximise use of premises. Lobbying will continue.</p> <p>JTS asked if the LA was working with other boroughs and across boroughs and considering sharing catchment areas. IH reported most boroughs were in the same position as there were so many spare places in London and parents are shopping around. Supporting the Afghan refugees helped some schools.</p> <p>KP thanked officers for their work to date and asked how members will know if the green bar will be affected, as per slide 28. IH explained that previously pupils struggled to gain entry to London Nautical but now many are gaining entry under their first choice.</p> <p>JE was asked what percentage of the 50% of students from out of borough have EHCPs? JE reported it varies from school to school, although she could check this information, whilst WA stated the only comparable borough was RBKC.</p> <p>IH informed members the next Isos working group would be receiving information on the financial position of schools with surplus places and would need to meet again.</p> <p>IH and WA left at 5.37pm following agreement of the resolutions.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION: i) To agree that the established Isos Working Group reviews strategies to reduce primary capacity further and brings recommendations back to the meeting on 17 June.</b></p> <p><b>ii) To agree that the Isos Working Group should continue to receive information on the deficit position of schools with significant surplus places to inform options to reduce capacity.</b></p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>2024/24 DSG UPDATE AND SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA ALLOCATIONS</b></p>	

	<p>ASt presented the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She highlighted paragraph 3.5 showing the total funds to be delegated and allocated through the schools block funding formula and explained the different allocations. There was one adjustment for St Stephen’s CE Primary. The notional SEN funding percentages remain unchanged for 2024-2025, with figures for each school shown at Appendix A.</p> <p>The costs of fair access placements in secondary schools are currently charged to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and are funded from the DSG reserve. The proposal for this to be funded from the DSG reserve balance this year and the other proposed de-delegated areas were discussed.</p> <p>KP reported that ASt had attended the WSSIC meeting and answered questions which was appreciated by Headteachers.</p> <p>DG asked if the funding of approximately £82k for trade union duties was for one school. ASt confirmed it was, as the LA was only aware of one school. She was asked if Edward Wilson could be included and it was agreed they would have a separate discussion.</p> <p>The Chair asked if a paper on use of reserves could be brought to a future meeting after the General Election, as the Schools’ Forum wants to de-delegate as little as possible.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) To agree the local funding formula distributes £129.268m funding.</li> <li>ii) To note the Teachers’ Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) to be confirmed later this term.</li> <li>iii) To agree the fair access placement increases agreed in January 2023 with a total estimated cost of £80,000 in 2024/25 is funded from the DSG reserve balance rather than a transfer from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB).</li> <li>iv) To agree the de-delegation of £0.082m to fund cover for trade union support for maintained schools.</li> <li>v) To agree the de-delegation of £0.350m as the estimated cost to fund re-organisation costs in 2024/25, where maintained schools meet the related requirements in the Scheme for Financing Schools.</li> <li>vi) To confirm the de-delegation of £0.170m to fund the loss of the School Intervention and Brokering Grant, which is used to fund statutory school improvement support and intervention in LA maintained schools grant funding.</li> </ul>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>HIGH NEEDS BUDGET UPDATE AND 2024/25 PROPOSED BUDGETS (INCLUDING INFORMATION REGARDING PLACEMENTS IN THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR</b></p>	

	<p>JE highlighted paragraph 8.3 on recommendations on affordable top up funding, explaining that there had been a detailed review of this at the High Needs Block Review Group (HNBRG).</p> <p>JE was asked if the LA was taking account of Top Ups, as The St Marylebone Church of England Bridge School has come out higher than the calculation. ASt stated it was based on the LA data from all Top Ups and took account of the fact that some pupils will need one to one support.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) To approve the HNB budget for 2024/25 as set out in Paragraph 7 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>ii) To note the high needs block forecast outlined in Paragraphs 3.1-3.2 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>iii) To note the 2024/25 funding for historic teachers pay and pensions contribution for special schools, AP and hospital providers will total £308, 835 and 2024/25 additional DSG funding allocations will total £329, 950.</b></li> <li><b>iv) To note the top ups for mainstream schools including capping of bands 8-10 and top ups for the SRPs will be reviewed as outlined at paragraph 8.3.</b></li> <li><b>v) To note the forward plan for the HNBRG outlined at section 9.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2024/25</b></p> <p>PG presented the report that had previously been circulated, highlighting paragraph 2.1, the 2024/2025 early years allocation and the indicative budgets. This will be revised in July 2024. She was asked if this will pass through to settings and informed members this will increase from 95% to 97% in time, although it is not known when. Early Years Pupil Premium is ring fenced. Further details will be brought to a future meeting.</p> <p>IK reported that there were relatively low numbers of pupils eligible for 30 hours of funding and low numbers will not help funding locally.</p> <p>JTS thanked officers for keeping the 10% deprivation factor and asked when information will be available. IK reported this would be available the following day. An additional person had been appointed to increase uptake and will work with the Family Information Service (FIS). Families are confused by the codes and will be supported. JTE requested if any contingency remained could consideration be given to allocating it to Early Years.</p> <p>DG asked for clarification on the recommendation at 5.3. IK explained that WCC had higher rates in nurseries and the DfE want this reduced to £10. It started at £12 and then reduced to £11.</p>	

	<p><b>RESOLUTION:</b> i) To note the methodology used to arrive at the budgets and hourly pass-through rates for providers in 2024/25, which is transparent, in line with DfE guidelines and deemed to strike a balance between allocating the maximum available to all providers while also allowing for eligible children to benefit from funding for deprivation and the SEN Inclusion Fund.</p> <p>ii) To note that the budget set aside for contingency is prudent and strikes a balance between providing a safeguard for managing fluctuations and maximising the amount passed directly to all providers through the hourly base rate.</p> <p>iii) To note the reduction in funding for maintained nurseries in line with the reduced capping for 2024/25.</p> <p>iv) To agree the hourly rate to be paid to providers of early years childcare and education in 2024/25 as set out in appendix A.</p>	
11.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLUTION: Noted.</b></p>	
12.	<p><b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Monday 18 March 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall  Monday 17 June 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p> <p><b>The meeting closed at 6.00pm.</b></p>	

### ACTIONS

Item 7	Isos Working Group to bring recommendations back to the meeting on 17 June.	IH/AsT
Item 7	Isos Working Group to receive information on the deficit position of schools with significant surplus places to inform options to reduce capacity.	AST