



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 18th March 2024 at 4.45pm at
Virtual via Teams

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Lee Duffy (LD)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary	Present
Primary Head	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
Primary Head	Alix Ascough (AA)	All Souls CE Primary	Apologies
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) (Chair)	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Carol Foyle (CF)	Queens Park Federation	Apologies
Primary Governor	Simon Mair (SM)	Edward Wilson Primary	Absent
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's CE High School	Apologies
Academies	6 Members		
Secondary Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Peter Broughton (PB)	Westminster City School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Susanne Staab (SS)	The Greycoat Hospital School	Absent
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	Apologies
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Liz Hilliard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery School	Present
Special Schools	1 member		
Executive Headteacher	Noel Gibb (NG)	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Absent
Headteacher QEII Special School	Represented by Claire Shepherd	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
PVI	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Apologies
14-19 Representative	1 member		
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School	Present
Officers in Attendance			
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	Apologies
Assistant Director – SEN & Educational Psychology	Julie Ely (JE)	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
Senior Adviser School Inclusion	Hilary Shaw (HS)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Senior School Governance Adviser/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children's Services Education	Present
Observers			
Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning	Cllr Aicha Less (AL)	Councillor	Apologies
Primary Academy Head	Lisa Breslin (LB)	Gateway Academy	Present
Director of Finance and Administration	John Mcdonald (JMc)	The St Marylebone CE School	Present

Item		Action
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were sent by Sarah Newman, Cllr Aicha Less, Alix Ascough, Eugene Moriarty, Michelle Burgess-Allen, John Trow-Smith, Sarah Newman, Shelley Duffy.</p> <p>Carol Foyle was unable to access the Teams link.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Andrew Garwood-Watkins declared that he was the Operations Director for the LDBS. There were no other declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>JS reported that Carol Foyle, Chair of Queens Park Federation, was the new Primary Governor with effect from 18 March 2024.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
4.	<p>MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were approved.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were approved.	
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
6.	DSG MONITORING 2023/24 AND ESTIMATED SCHOOL BALANCES	

	<p>ASt presented the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She reported the underspend of £656k of the Total Dedicated Schools Grant 23/24 was as a result of the High Needs Underspend. The Schools Block overspend was mainly due to Falling Rolls and in-year funding pressures for secondary fair access payments of £80k. There is an underspend of £732k for top up funding. In addition, whilst there had been pressure on staffing cover, this had been corrected and the improved position reflects action taken to validate payment schedules. Independent sector placements are forecast to underspend by £440k reflecting two expected placements which have not yet commenced.</p> <p><u>School balances and schools in financial difficulty</u></p> <p>Members were informed that fourteen (14) schools had deficits totalling £2.1m, increasing to overall deficits of £3m at the end of 2023/24. Six schools had agreed licensed deficit plans, whilst the others are still being worked on. Whilst it is a complex picture, schools are trying to work out plans with the support of the LA.</p> <p>Westminster had been allocated £290k additional funding for schools in financial difficulty. Proposed options for the use of this funding will go to the next ISOS working group and in turn recommendations will be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting.</p> <p>KP asked if schools were given a deadline to complete their deficit plans. ASt stated that the Scheme for Financing Schools states schools must set a budget and deficit budget plan. This would include looking at staff restructures and working with the Diocese. There is no statutory deadline but the LA is required to send an action plan to the DfE outlining clear actions on how the LA is addressing schools with deficit budgets.</p> <p><u>Hospital education</u></p> <p>KP asked if there was any funding available for hospital education for 16-18 year olds. JE confirmed that Chelsea Community Hospital School (CCHS), as a centrally funded local authority service does support students up to 18 years, but often this group have complex individual needs and there are barriers to support them. JE gave examples of four placements and reminded members that the LA has an SLA with CCHS. She invited any schools that would be interested in becoming a specialist resourced provision or satellite of the hospital school to contact her. IH agreed and reiterated her points.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To note the revised 2023-2024 DSG allocation of £95.334m and forecast underspend of £0.656m. ii) To note the projected year end school balances. 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HIGH NEEDS BLOCK REFERENCE GROUP (HNBGR)</p> <p>JE presented the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She</p>	

	<p>advised the recommendations had been discussed in detail, along with the budget lines and pressures, the EHCP graph and the SEND support graph. The most prevalent issues were autism, speech and language and social emotional and mental health.</p> <p>Schools had provided details of their staffing structures and actual expenditure to evidence increases and the HNBRG reviewed the proposals in Appendix A. Members were informed that by 2027 it was expected there would be 1670 EHCPs and anticipated that most pupils would receive support in mainstream schools and settings.</p> <p>Due to the complex nature of the school, it had not been possible to complete the top up review for Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee school prior to the HNBRG meeting in February and officers are actively working with the school to ensure this is completed. To further support evidence of costs and necessary top ups, it is recommended that the school consider a school resource management advisor (SRMA) review via the DfE.</p> <p>The HNBRG discussed and recommended increased investment in SCERTS (Social Communication Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support). The LA wants to increase the investment in SCERTS as outlined at 5.3. It is intended that there would be a small team of SEND specialists who could model requirements for EHCPs. Outreach would be developed and the existing model with OAT would be extended as more complex and extreme behaviours are being seen.</p> <p>Consideration was given to investing in using the development funding in speech and language, but funding of £1m from Health will be available for speech and language. Therefore, it was felt it would not be appropriate to use the development funding for this.</p> <p>CLCH is the speech and language provider aligned with Health. The development funding will be used for diagnostic work by commissioning a specialist consultancy to look at other LAs data.</p> <p>The Chair declared an interest as he is a governor at the Federation of Westminster Special Schools. He then asked what the cost would be to the Federation. He was advised it would be £63k and all recommendations were affordable.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To approve the recommendations regarding increases to the capped bandings 8-10 and bandings 1-7 for mainstream and early years as outlined in section 3 of the report.</p> <p>ii) To approve the proposed top ups for the SRPs and Special Schools from April 2024. To also note the £250k set aside for the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School review and the recommendation that the school consider a school resource</p>	

	<p>management advisor (SRMA) review via the DfE, as outlined at section 4.</p> <p>iii) To approve the recommended proposals for development as outlined at section 5 of the report.</p> <p>iv) To note the forward plan for the HNBRG as outlined at section 6 of the report.</p>	
8.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>LH asked for more details about how the £266k will be targeted, particularly the roll out of the SCERTS model, as it had been found to be a useful model in Early Years. JE explained there would be a structured training offer, delivered by the Inclusion Service and SCERTS specialists who developed the approach. The model of roll out would include some online sessions and practical support to implement the use of visuals etc. by having practitioners in classrooms work alongside school SENCOs and class teachers.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Noted.</p>	
9.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Monday 17 June 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.30pm.</p>	

ACTIONS

There were no actions from this meeting.