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MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2018

Present:

Primary School Head Teachers/Representatives

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed (Chairman)

Primary School Governor Representative

Ms M Lonican, School Governor representative

Academy School Representatives

Mr S Brennand, Unity

Mr R Farley, Westminster

Ms T Harrison, Thames

Mr D Medcalf, St Georges

Ms L Riley, Highfield (on behalf of H McKenzie OBE)

Special School Academy Representative

Ms S Fielder, Park Academy

Non-Schools Members

Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations

Mr D Dickinson, Staff/Teacher Associations

Mr R Rendell, Early Years Strategic Group

Mr S Hughes, Blackpool and the Fylde College

Pupil Referral Unit

Ms W Casson, Education Diversity

In Attendance:

CLlr K Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning

Mr M Golden, Finance Manager

Mr P Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager

Mr P Thompson, Head of SEND

Mr P Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion

Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources

Mr C Williams, Democratic Governance Adviser (observing)

Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were received from Karen Haworth, Woodlands (Special School Maintained Representative), Janet Carroll, Roseacre (Academy School Representative), Nick Toyne, Devonshire (Academy School Representative), Edward Vitalis, Marton/South Shore (Bright Futures) and Lynn Donkin, Consultant in Public Health.

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2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2018

The minutes of the Schools Forum held on 19 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting, with the exception that the spelling of Richard Rendell be corrected at item 3 and the reference be amended to Langdale Free School at item 7.

Matters arising for the minutes were noted:

Item 4: a request for an update on the progression of the Children's Centre Consultation was made, the length of time it had taken to complete the consultation was highlighted. It was noted that consultation with schools continued and no update was available.

Item 6: it was noted that no job description for the School Safeguarding Adviser role had been circulated. Paul Turner confirmed that the job description was unchanged and an offer had been extended to one candidate.

Item 6: it was noted that a positive audit of the Pupil Welfare Service had been undertaken.

Item 8: it was reported that Paul Turner had met with various secondary school leaders to discuss the devolution of Alternative Provision funding and provide further information to them.

Item 9: it was reported that the elective home education (EHE) process now contained more quality assurance and a RAG rating system had been implemented. Any children identified as being in the red category were added to the children missing from education register, it was recognised that the majority of children educated at home were rated as green which indicated that the local authority were happy with the quality of education provision and the safeguarding of the child.

Item 11: the funding flowchart to outline funding options for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities within mainstream settings would be presented to Primary and Secondary Headteachers at their respective meetings by Phil Thompson.

4 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

It was noted that Nick Toyne had stepped down from his role as Vice Chair of the Schools Forum. The Forum agreed to defer the appointment of a new Vice Chair until the January 2019 meeting where both the Chair and the Vice Chair would be reappointed.

5 REVIEW OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager, reported that the Schools Forum Membership and Constitution had been reviewed and no changes were

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required.

6 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Apologies from Lynn Donkin, Consultant in Public Health, were recorded at the meeting. No questions were presented arising from the report. It was noted that the Primary PSHE Support Officer appointed would be based within the Headstart team.

7 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Paul Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion, provided an update and reported that the Local Authority teams were static. Inclusion had been considered and Ged McNally, Inclusion Manager, had made a positive contribution, acting as an advocate for children. Statutory assessment and moderation was considered good and moderators had been retrained resulting in Blackpool primary standards being close to the National standards.

Paul Turner was keen to highlight positive aspects of both primary and secondary schools in Blackpool. Improved leadership had been recognised in secondary schools and a reduction in fixed term exclusions compared to the previous year.

It was noted that a curriculum workshop was in development to look at the impact of curriculum and the inclusion of vocational strands.

Paul Turner reported that staffing in the Admissions Team was stable and the Pupil Welfare Team had increased to 21 team members through increased purchase of services from schools. It was recognised that Blackpool attendance was close to National average in primary schools.

It was reported that the successful candidate for the School Safeguarding Advisor post would be confirmed and details circulated once finalised.

In conclusion, Paul Turner indicated that promoting positivity of Blackpool and education was being highlighted as was praise to schools in Blackpool.

Jo Hirst reported that representatives from Highfield, South Shore and Bispham Endowed had been invited to join a UK and Singapore Building Bridges project operated by the Department for Education and British Council which would raise the profile of Blackpool.

8 ACADEMY AND FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Phil Thompson, Head of SEND, provided an update on the new special Free School. It was reported that consultation with sponsors and the Department for Education (DfE) had been undertaken to look to open the Free School in September 2019 rather than March 2020 as planned. The proposal had suggested use of temporary accommodation until the dedicated new building had been completed. It was noted that the DfE would make the ultimate decision.

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To provide an update on Academies, Paul Turner reported that there had been no new applications for academy status. It was noted that representatives from single and multi-academy trusts now attended the Blackpool School Improvement Board. The local authority would look to rationalise how academies were held to account and it was noted that the local authority would discuss any support needs with the academies as required.

9 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided an update on the latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget. The working group tasked to monitor the three-year plan had met and the plan had been updated and changes were summarised. It was noted that the assumptions underpinning the three-year plan remained ambitious, particularly with respect to numbers of pupils in specialist schools. It was recognised that in Blackpool 79% of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans were placed in specialist provision, a rise from the previous year (72%) and higher than the National average of 50%.

It was reported that the working group had considered how the proportion of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans in mainstream schools could be influenced. The Schools Forum further discussed how to manage the High Needs Block.

It was recognised that the Schools Forum were required to produce a plan to address the budget deficit.

It was reported that parent perception indicated that an Education, Health and Care Plan would lead to placement within specialist school provision which may not be required to meet the child's needs, adding to costs of placements and transport.

It was noted that good practice within Blackpool schools could be shared and encouraged. More training for staff was also discussed to maintain provision within the school setting. Better links with health colleagues was discussed as was Health representation at the SEND Strategy Group.

It was noted that meeting the needs of the pupils should remain a priority as well as consideration of financial pressures. It was also recognised that Headteachers needed to be better informed about the impact of the High Needs budget pressures.

Resolved:

- **The Schools Forum recommended that the High Needs Working Group review the high cost of placements and identify the alternative options.**
- **The Schools Forum recommended that Wendy Casson and Jo McNulty provide input to the Blackpool School Improvement Board Strategy Group to highlight behaviour and speech and language good practice.**
- **The Schools Forum recommended that consultation with other geographical areas be undertaken to identify good practice of addressing High Needs that may be**

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implemented in Blackpool.

- **The Schools Forum recommended that the report and recommendations of Premier Advisory Group on high needs provision be re-presented to the School Improvement Board for consideration. It was also requested that the Report be circulated to members of the High Needs Working Group and the Schools Forum.**
- **The Schools Forum resolved to receive an update with proposed solutions at the January 2019 meeting.**
- **The Schools Forum resolved to receive a more balanced budget forecast at the next meeting to identify best and worst case scenarios.**

10 INCLUSION UPDATE

Paul Turner provided a report to outline proposed changes to the Illuminate Funding criteria to enable more flexible criteria to better support young people. It was recognised that of the listed seven criteria options, a minimum of two should be met.

The Schools Forum agreed to changes of the criteria as outlined with the exception that point one be reworded. It was noted that those meeting the criteria would be back dated to September 2018 and the new criteria would be used going forward.

In response to a query, it was noted that the funding would generate automatically.

Paul Turner provided an update on the Devolution of Alternative Provision Funding. Since the previous meeting, Paul Turner had met with headteachers and senior officers within schools and academies and reported that all seemed happy to support the initial one year period to look at the Alternative Provision market.

It was noted that an Alternative Provision Lead would be employed to work with headteachers and senior officers to provide a partnership solution to Alternative Provision. It was noted that the project would be funded through the Opportune Area.

Resolved:

- **The Schools Forum resolved to agree the changes to the Illuminate funding criteria with the wording change as discussed.**

11 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2018/2019

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, provided a report on the budget position of the 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 August 2018. It was noted that the main budget pressures would come from the High Needs Block which would impact on school reserves. It was suggested that the deficit forecast was optimistic.

No further questions or comments were received on the report.

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12 MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT FACTOR

Hilary Wood presented a report to inform the Schools Forum about the potential shortfall on the Management Improvement Factor (MIF) provision and requested a discussion of options for resolving the situation.

It was recognised that interest gained on the funds could be used which would total £11k per year.

Following discussion, Schools Forum Members agreed that the Local Authority Head of Legal should be consulted to determine who was responsible for payment and report back to the next Schools Forum meeting in January 2019.

Resolved:

- **Hilary Wood, after consultation with the Local Authority Head of Legal Services should determine who was responsible for payment and report back to the next Schools Forum meeting in January 2019.**

13 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2019/2020 PROPOSALS

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager, asked the Schools Forum to consider the local authority's proposals for the allocation of the schools funding formula for 2019/20.

The local authority had consulted with schools on options for the schools funding formula, and presented its recommendations. Of the six recommendations (2.1), the report indicated the majority were consistent with consultation responses or previous Forum decisions. Discussion focussed on the proposal to transfer 1% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. While 100% of respondents to the consultation had supported the need for a transfer again in 2019/20, only 45% supported the increase to 1%.

The Forum requested that briefings be made to the Primary and Secondary Headteachers to provide further information about the High Needs budget pressures and implications of the level of transfer from the Schools Block. It was noted that other Forum members would be welcome to attend the briefing sessions.

The Forum requested that the information provided should clearly state the consequence not just on individual schools but on all Blackpool children.

It was also requested that further information be provided to the Schools Forum on the implications of going into Dedicated School Grant deficit.

Paul Sharples noted that with either a 0.5% or 1% transfer, no school would lose funding within the model.

Following discussion, the Forum agreed to ask the Local Authority to inform the Secretary of State that they had approved a transfer from the Schools Block of up to 1%. At its

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meeting in January, Schools Forum would make a more informed decision about the level of transfer from the Schools Block within the 1% limit to be requested from the Secretary of State.

Resolved:

- **The Forum requested that briefings be made to the Primary and Secondary Headteachers to provide further information about the High Needs budget pressures and implications of the level of transfer from the Schools Block. Other Forum members would be welcome to attend the briefing sessions.**
- **The Forum requested that the information provided should clearly state the consequence not just on individual schools but on all Blackpool children.**
- **Further information to be provided to the Schools Forum on the implications of going into Dedicated School Grant deficit.**
- **The Forum agreed to ask the Local Authority to inform the Secretary of State that they had approved a transfer from the Schools Block of up to 1%.**

14 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2019

The Forum noted the dates for the Schools Forum Meetings in 2019.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 15 January 2019 at 9.15am, @The Grange (formally the City Learning Centre), Bathurst Avenue, Blackpool, FY3 7RW.

Chairman

(The meeting ended 12.13pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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