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MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

Present:

Primary School Head Teachers/Representatives

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed (Chairman)
Ms E Allen, St John Vianney

Primary School Governor Representative

Ms M Lonican, School Governor representative

Academy School Representatives

Ms J Carroll, Roseacre
Mr S Brennand, Unity
Ms T Harrison, Thames
Mr D Medcalf, St Georges
Mr N Toyne, Devonshire
Ms S Jackson, Highfield (on behalf of H McKenzie OBE)
Mr E Vitalis, Marton/South Shore (Bright Futures)

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

Pupil Referral Unit

Ms W Casson, Education Diversity

Post 16

Mr S Hughes, Blackpool and the Fylde College

In Attendance:

Cllr G Cain, Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities) (on behalf of Cllr K Benson)
Ms D Booth, Director of Children's Services (ITEM 4)
Mrs L Donkin, Consultant in Public Health
Ms M Foster, Head of Early Help (ITEM 4)
Mr M Golden, Finance Manager
Ms S McCartan, Service Manager, Early Help (ITEM 4)
Mr P Sharples, School Funding and PFI Manager
Mr P Thompson, Head of SEND
Ms N Turner, Integrated Commissioning Manager (ITEM 4)
Mr P Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion
Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were received from Rosie Sycamore, Special School Maintained Representative and Roger Farley, Academy School Headteacher Representative.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Tracey Harrison, Thames Primary School, declared an interest in Item 4, Children's Centres Consultation, the nature of the interest was the connection between Thames Primary School and Thames Children's Centre.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

It was reported that Stanley Primary School would not convert to an academy in contrast to the minutes.

It was reported by Richard Rendell, Early Years, that Better Start had undertaken quarterly quality mark monitoring for early years settings up to May 2018. It was noted that there were 40 settings on the Ofsted Early Years register with provision for under five's and 14 schools with pre-school provision not separately registered with Ofsted, totalling 54 settings. Three settings had so far achieved a quality mark, 22 were working towards the mark and a further six considering the process. It was reported that the Quality Marks were appreciated by Ofsted.

4 CHILDREN'S CENTRES CONSULTATION

Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services, Nicola Turner, Integrated Commissioning Manager and Sara McCartan, Service Manager, Early Help provided an update on the commissioning review of school based children's centres. The review considered the provision in Children's Centres. It was noted that during the development of a final recommendations report, where the local and national context had been considered, extensive consultation had taken place. The model offer had been identified and was discussed. The implications on staffing were also discussed and indicated that redundancies were expected but would be kept to a minimum, with alternative options of employment offered where possible. It was noted that the anticipated savings from the new model would realise the necessary savings required to offset the future reduction in funding, and would also allow for any redundancy and pension strain costs to be met.

It was commented that the delivery options presented in the review were fair and showed the best value for money for retaining services.

It was commented that the update had provided more positive and creative options for school based children's centres than had previously been discussed and that the best options for families were welcomed. On behalf of the Schools Forum, thanks and recognition were extended to those involved.

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

The forum noted the report.

(Diane Booth, Sara McCartan, Moya Foster and Nicola Turner left the meeting)

5 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Lynn Donkin, Consultant in Public Health, reported on various initiatives from Public Health since the previous meeting. The Give Up Loving Pop (GULP) campaign ran in April 2018 and encouraged school children to accumulate the most pop free days over the 21 day challenge, with the winner receiving a reward. A similar secondary school campaign would be developed in conjunction with Headstart. Furthermore, a campaign for under five's to promote good oral health and the choice of water or milk to drink had run across the North West with a localised version anticipated to be launched in June 2018.

A new Health visiting service for Blackpool was introduced in April 2018, to enable families in Blackpool to receive an enhanced universal offer to look to reduce health inequalities in communities. As a part of the health visiting transformation plan, the school readiness pilot would run until July 2018 to support the transition to school, following the pilot, the roll out of the initiative would be during the next academic year.

In relation to oral health, an increase in 'free from dental decay' was noted rising from 57.5% to 75.1% following a twelve month scheme which included supervised brushing and promotion of dental visibility in the community. Furthermore, diet and nutrition awareness were assisting with dental health.

Finally, Lynn Donkin advised that Public Health England had alerted authorities to outbreaks of measles in several areas in the UK. Although a good uptake of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine was apparent in Blackpool, advice was to promote the signs of measles and the vaccine option available. Information had been circulated to schools, it was also noted that the vaccine was available to adults.

In response to a question, it was recognised that a combination of initiatives contributed to the improvements in oral health as well as a culture change to better promote oral health. It was further asked whether secondary schools would be included in data collection on oral health. Lynn Donkin confirmed that data on 12 year olds was collected every two to four years; anecdotally, it was reported that secondary school children seemed to be making more healthy choices and promoting better choices should be encouraged.

It was noted that there had been a Public Health Working Group which included school representatives and public health staff to ensure schools were kept informed. It had been agreed that the working group was no longer required. Public Health updates would continue to come through Schools Forum and if necessary through the Primary/Special and Secondary Headteacher groups.

The Forum noted the report.

(Lynn Donkin left the meeting)

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Due to the appointment of Paul Turner to the role of Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion, a vacancy was available for the Safeguarding Advisor role. As a Schools Forum funded post, members were asked to consider whether they would like to re-appoint to the role and at what pay scale? It was acknowledged that the role would maintain a level of responsibility but the number of tasks would decrease. It was noted that the role should be fair and equitable and maintain the service and standard required by schools. It was agreed that a draft job description would be developed for consideration by the Chair, the Vice-Chair and relevant Council officers.

Paul Turner reported that the Early Years review was near completion. It was further noted that the Attendance Strategy would require review and consultation as it had last been updated in 2014. Consideration would be given to prosecutions for attendance and also identifying the right process for both schools and families in relation to attendance. The Pupil Welfare Service was scheduled to be looked at and updated.

It was noted that Project Search, a project to provide people with learning difficulties internships at the Local Authority was continuing, providing the options to learn and the possibility to access employment.

It was recognised that the Local Authority were looking to extend their administration and support for children missing from education. It was also noted that a Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) with an education specialism would visit the Local Authority during a Children's Services Ofsted inspection and was noted that schools may be visited during this type of inspection, with a focus upon children on part time timetables.

Data Protection Officer to support schools had been appointed. Data management queries from Schools could be sent to Paul Turner until the responsible officer commenced in post in September 2018.

The Forum noted the update.

The Forum agreed:

- A draft job description for the Safeguarding Advisor role would be developed for consideration by the Chair, the Vice-Chair and relevant Council officers (Paul Turner).

7 ACADEMY AND FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Paul Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion, reported that Stuart Aris would continue as Head Teacher at the Langdale Free School. It was noted that the Armfield Free School was on schedule to open in September 2018.

The Forum noted the update.

8 INCLUSION UPDATE

Paul Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion, informed members of the options available to reduce the High Needs Block spend in relation to Alternative

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

Provision.

The report highlighted the forecast for 2018-2019 numbers to stay below 258 places with a permanent target of 200 Pupil Referral Unit (PPU) places. A Right to Succeed Programme would work with 100 pupils to prevent exclusion. A proposal by The Alternative School (TAS) for the commissioning of places was presented. The Alternative Provision devolution was a trial to allow schools to procure, commission or establish alternative provision within their schools or the local area to benefit Blackpool children.

Paul Turner sought views from the Schools Forum on Alternative Provision as the Local Authority would not commission services on behalf of schools without consultation. It was noted that the definition of Alternative Provision was anything not in a mainstream setting and did not include elective home educated.

For the Alternative Provision devolution, the two year High Needs pilot would allow schools to have more input in Alternative Provision and decide whether that worked in Blackpool. The Forum were asked to agree in principle to trial a different way to spend the Alternative Provision budget and decide how to monitor the spending. The pilot would attract additional funding from the Opportunity Area and the Schools Forum would quality assure the process.

Comments from members indicated that the additional funding would be welcomed. Concerns that some issues may not be seen in schools and that the overspend would pass from High Needs budget to schools budget were raised. Hilary Wood commented that the whole high needs budget would not be included but the extra money was available and consideration could be given to how it was used.

It was recognised that the funding should be used to create the best outcomes for children.

It was recognised that The Alternative School (TAS) had operated in Blackpool since 2016 and following discussion on Alternative Provision, they submitted their report for consideration.

It was recognised that the pilot would help to identify needs. Some members were concerned that Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) were opposed to the pilot. It was noted that Paul Turner would meet with FCAT representative to discuss the options further.

In response to a query relating to home and hospital provision, it was recognised that home and hospital provision was captured in the pupil referral unit numbers.

Implications on the provision at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) were raised as a concern including possible staffing reduction implications and loss of staffing expertise. It was noted that the PRU was working with the Local Authority to establish needs. Paul Turner commented that the pilot would recognise the capacity of current provision to achieve preferred outcomes.

It was noted that the Right to Succeed programme would go ahead as it had been funded.

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

The forum agreed:

- To support the Alternative Provision pilot.
- That FCAT did not agree to the pilot but would engage with the process.

9 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Paul Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion, reported the pupil numbers who were electively home educated. It was recognised that there would be more quality assurance of the elective home education process, it was further noted that there would be no support available for elective home education over the statutory requirements.

It was commented that accountability was welcomed and suggested that the Local Authority may recommend the original school as a return destination. It was acknowledged that attendance figures may be affected for persistent absentees in the rare chance that a school attendance order would need to be pursued, for children who had elected for home education but it was deemed to be unsuitable. Paul Turner acknowledged that this was a part of the process.

The Forum noted the report.

10 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided an update on the developments with various aspects of High Needs funding.

The High Needs Funding Sub-group had highlighted that more pupils with additional needs would need to be supported in mainstream settings if costs were to be reduced and projects to address these issues had begun. The Sub-group also noted that where the SENCo in a school was a part of the senior leadership team, there was more potential for positive changes in relation to inclusion and support. It was noted that the Sub-group planned to analyse unit cost information relating to different types of placement at their June 2018 meeting.

In relation to the New Special Free School, it was noted that the opening date was unlikely to be before January 2020 rather than September 2019 as anticipated.

In relation to charging for permanent exclusions, the Forum was asked to consider increased charges in line with the increased value of factors in the 2018/19 school funding formula. The Forum members voted on the proposal with eight for the proposal, one against and one abstained.

The Forum was asked to consider reverting to the previous methodology, whereby a full year's costs were charged to the excluding school, apart from Year 11 pupils, where the charge would be pro rata'd to the end of the academic year. The forum members voted on the proposal with five against, none in favour and five abstained.

In relation to exceptional circumstances funding, the forum was asked to approve proposals to recalibrate the percentage required for high cost places to 20% of the notional SEN budget, compared to 35% in 2017-2018. The forum agreed to the proposal and to review the percentage each year.

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

The Forum noted that report.

11 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

11a Year End Budget Monitoring 2017/2018

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, provided an update on the budget position of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2018 and the Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 March 2018.

Significant pressures on the High Needs Block were noted. The High Needs over spend had reduced since last reported in January 2017 by £291,000 from £849,000 to £558,000. It was further noted that the Schools Block and Early Years Block forecasted an under spend of £32,000 and an overspend of £6,000 respectively representing an improvement of £30,000 since January.

An impact on the reserves was noted as £25,677 year end surplus.

The Forum noted the report.

11b Initial Budget Position 2018/2019

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, provided a report on the budget position of the 2018-2019 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31 May 2018 and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 May 2018.

It was noted that the report reflected the budgets as approved at the March 2018 Schools Forum. Early monitoring suggested the main pressures would derive from the High Needs block and three areas of concern were highlighted as at May 2018. The numbers at the PRU were higher than planned with a forecast overspend of £95,000; Beaumont College had increased fees by 3% resulting in a £50,000 overspend within the post 16 budget; additional growth of £460,000 was added to the out of borough budget based on spend and demand in 2017-2018, however, the funding had already been used due to increased numbers during the summer term, therefore new places from September 2018 would create an over spend.

One comment requested that schools look to work with the Local Authority to try to meet the additional needs of the child within school and provide reassurance to the parents that their child's needs could be met. Forum members requested clear guidance as to what funding was available and it was agreed that a flowchart would be produced and circulated. Schools also requested guidance on how to provide support through the assessment process. It was noted that exceptional circumstances funding was £119,000 in the Dedicated Schools Grant budget.

The Forum noted the report.

The forum agreed:

- That schools would promote the message to retain Blackpool Children in Blackpool schools where possible.
- That a funding flowchart be developed and circulated to schools to outline funding options within mainstream settings. (Phil Thompson)

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

12 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA DEVELOPMENTS

Paul Sharples, Schools Funding and PFI Manager, provided an update on recent working groups and discussions held by the Department for Education regarding undefined elements of the national schools funding formula. The two workshops included Pupil Growth and Mobility funding factors.

It was reported that Schools Forums can agree to set aside a contingency from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support schools that were permanently expanding, in Blackpool Mereside Academy was funded. It was also reported that inherent growth within the formula, in Blackpool, Gateway Academy and Armfield Free School were included as estimated numbers at new schools continue to expand.

It was noted that Mobility was a factor that was optional for Schools Forums and only 67 of the 152 local authorities chose to use it in 2017-2018. In January 2018, Schools Forum agreed to continue to use the Mobility factor to allocate funding to Blackpool schools.

Hilary Wood reported that at the Department for Education Workshop held on 18 June 2018, the National Formula was discussed and further details for 2019/20 were given. There will be a new methodology for allocating growth funding, and full details would be issued in July 2018. While a new methodology for mobility funding was under consideration, this was unlikely to be implemented in 2019/20. The information to be published in July 2018 would also contain further details about the Department for Education's plans for 2020/2021.

It was noted that there would be a Hospital Education consultation in Autumn 2018.

The Forum noted the report.

13 SCHEME FOR FINANCING BLACKPOOL SCHOOLS

Paul Sharples, Schools Funding and PFI Manager, outlined changes to the Department for Education guidance and requested approval on the revisions highlighted in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing Schools from maintained schools representatives.

The Forum agreed:

To adopt the outlined changes to the Department for Education guidance and requested approval on the revisions outlined in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing Schools.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 9 October 2018.

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2018

Chairman

(The meeting ended 12.15pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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