



Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Directorate

A

BARNSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 16th JANUARY 2024

PRESENT

Headteacher and Board Representatives

Paul Crook, Andrew Ravenscroft, Anna Rooney, Simon Tabbner and Joe Woffinden

Governor Representative(s)

Margaret Gostelow and Michael Sanderson

Nursery Provision Representative

Simon Sykes

Early Years Representative

Kathy Fletcher

Further Education and 14 – 19 Years Provision Representative

Neil Wilkinson

Special and Alternative Provision Representatives

Josh Greaves

Local Authority Representative

Councillor Janine Moyes

Officers

Nina Sleight

Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention)

Josh Amahwe

Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC

Helen Perrin	Principal Accountant, Barnsley MBC
Anna Turner	Head of Education and Partnerships, Barnsley MBC
Shafeek Khan	Secretary to the Barnsley Schools Forum

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Formal apologies were submitted by Ms Day, Mr England, Mrs Gilmore Mrs Gorton and Mr Morgan.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Representatives of the Forum declared their interest in relation to matters being considered particularly as part of agenda items 6-10 of today's meeting.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM**

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 16th January 2024 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

No matters arose during consideration of these minutes.

5. **REPORTS**

Provisional Education Outcomes in the Borough (2023)

Ms Sleight and Ms Turner presented the latest, published education outcomes for the Borough. Results at the Early Years Foundation Stage, together with Key Stages 1 and 2 had been extremely favourable. Progress continued to be made in the attainment of young people at Key Stages 4 and 5, however, due to the return of formal examinations and the Government's attempts to tackle grade 'inflation' the number of young people achieving the highest grades had declined in comparison to the baseline of 2019.

The progress of groups of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people was also noted, together with the targeted, remedial action to be taken to improve outcomes further during 2024. Members of the Forum commended the outcomes, particularly for children with an education, health and care plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Schools Forum notes the latest, published provisional education results in the Borough, together with the action taken in continuing to improve outcomes during 2024.

Special Educational Needs (SEND) Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 2: 2023/2024)

Ms Sleight presented the latest quarterly report to the Forum and commented particularly on the following:

- Progress against the Written Statement of Action, formulated following the outcomes of the previous joint, local area inspection in 2021, including evidence of impact.
- The formal creation, last month, of the statutory, local area SEND and AP Partnership.
- Preparedness for the next local area joint inspection, expected this year.
- Progress against the conditions of the SEND 'Safety Valve' Agreement between the Department for Education and Barnsley MBC. Here, progress had been consistent with the previous quarter and on track to achieve the outcomes sought.
- The latest budgetary position during this period, including variations in expenditure, together with the action being taken to manage and mitigate risks.

RESOLVED:

- **The Schools Forum notes the latest, published quarterly SEND Performance and Finance report.**

Schools Budget Outturn Report (Quarter 3: 2023/24)

Mr Amahwe presented a report on the outturn position at the end of Quarter 3 and commented on the following:

- The schools delegated DSG budget, including school balances.
- Centrally retained school budgets, including the increase in the overall deficit and the factors which were attributable for this.
- Managing and mitigating risks through the DSG Management Plan.

Discussion arose on the continuing cost pressures which had led to a reduction in school balances. Ms Turner commented that maintained schools which were subject to conversion into an academy, could only proceed on the understanding that no budget deficit should be carried forward. Mrs Rooney added that a further factor in cost pressures, faced by maintained schools were falling pupil rolls. Both Mr Crook and Mr Tabbner reiterated the need for the Local Authority to satisfactorily support schools in managing these risks.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Schools Forum notes the latest, projected outturn position for both the schools delegated budget and centrally retained DSG budgets, including the projected deficit in the High Needs Block.**

Schools Funding Settlement (2024/2025)

Mr Amahwe provided details concerning the schools funding settlement for Barnsley, during 2024/25. The total amount of DSG funding amounted to £272.5 million, an increase of £16.7 million with funding to be allocated, as follows:

- Schools Block funding = £202.747 million
- High Needs Block funding = £42.154 million
- Early Years Block funding = £25.991 million

- Central Schools Services Block funding = £1.575 million

Mr Amahwe accounted for the increases in funding, including the expansion of early years entitlements to children aged two years during 2024 and for children aged nine months from 2025, together with Pupil Premium Grant funding and top-up payments to schools and settings for high needs as well as grants to help meet the costs of universal free school meals for infants, teachers' pay and pensions.

RESOLVED:

- **The Schools Forum notes the funding settlement for schools in Barnsley, across the 4 funding blocks during 2024/25 and for these to form the basis of determining the budgets for schools and settings.**
- **The Schools Forum also notes confirmation of other funding available for schools during this period, including the Pupil Premium Grant, teachers remuneration and universal infant free school meals.**

Schools Block Funding Arrangements (2024/25)

Mr Amahwe proceeded to detail the proposed budget for the Schools Block, with particular reference to the following:

- The steps being taken to increase alignment between the local schools funding formula and the national formula during 2024/25.
- The determinants and values for the various funding factors in the Schools Block.
- The proposal to transfer 1% of funding to the High Needs Block as outlined in the SEND 'Safety Valve' Agreement and agreed by the Schools Forum at its previous meeting.
- Arrangements for the de-delegation of funding back to the Local Authority for contingencies, assessing eligibility for free school meals and cover for teaching staff.
- De-delegation of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant back to the Local Authority to support sector-based, peer-led school improvement.

A motion was called for a formal vote to be taken by maintained school representatives in the Schools Group, on the de-delegation proposals contained in this report.

The first vote related to primary-phase maintained schools and all representatives who were present and eligible, voted in favour of the proposals. The second vote concerned secondary-phase maintained schools and the representative who was eligible to vote, did so in favour of the proposals.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Schools Forum notes the Schools Block DSG allocations for 2024/25 and the changes to the local schools funding formula as outlined in the report.**

- **The Schools Forum notes that the proposed schools funding formula for 2024/25 incorporates a transfer of funding amounting to 1% to the High Needs Block, as previously agreed by the Forum and subject to DfE approval of the subsequent disapplication request, submitted by the Local Authority.**
- **The Schools Forum agrees that the funding for maintained primary and secondary schools, ascribed for contingencies, assessing eligibility for frees school meals, cover for teaching staff and school improvement activity, should be de-delegated and retained by the Local Authority to fund central schools expenditure.**

Early Years Block Funding Arrangements (2024/25)

Mr Amahwe outlined the funding settlement relating to the Early Years Block and referred to the following:

- The Early Years funding formula.
- Hourly funding rates for providers.
- Early Years Pupil Premium funding, together with other funding supplements.
- Levels of funding subject to 'pass-through' requirements for providers.
- The requirement for the Local Authority to establish an Inclusion Fund to support children aged two years with special educational needs.

The next steps would include updating participation hours data based on the last three census tallies and to inform schools and early years providers of their indicative budget shares by the end of February.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Schools Forum notes the provisional DSG funding settlement for the Early Years Block during 2024/25.**
- **The Schools Forum notes arrangements for allocating early years funding to providers and settings responsible for children aged three and four, through the existing early years funding formula, during 2024/25.**
- **The Forum also notes arrangements for allocating early years funding to providers and settings with responsibility for children aged two, together with those aged nine months, through the revised early years funding formula, during 2024/25.**

Central Schools Services Block Funding (2024/25)

Mr Amahwe then referred to the proposed distribution of funding for the Central Schools Services Block, particularly concerning ongoing responsibilities and

historic commitments. These ongoing responsibilities were currently comprised of the following:

- Department for Education copyright licences.
- Teachers pay and pension costs.
- School admissions.
- Schools Forum running costs.
- Asset management. Here, it was noted by the Forum that this proposal included support to the '*Building Schools for the Future*' Team and that the Local Authority was reviewing its asset management strategy as part of its wider service transformation programme.
- Education welfare service.
- Statutory and regulatory duties.

Among the historic funding commitments were the following:

- Education of looked-after children for whom the Local Authority is the 'corporate parent'.
- School improvement activity.

A motion was put forward requesting a vote on whether the Schools Forum agrees with the proposed funding arrangements for these activities during 2024/25. Following the vote involving eligible members, these funding proposals were unanimously supported.

RESOLVED:

- **The Schools Forum agrees to the funding for the following statutory and retained functions of the Local Authority at the same levels as in the current year, as follows:**
 - **School admissions = £275,000**
 - **Administrative costs for the Schools Forum = £7,000**
 - **Asset Management = £251,000**
 - **Education Welfare = £208,000**
 - **Other statutory and regulatory functions = £41,000**
 - **Education of looked after children = £200,000**
 - **Barnsley Alliance and school improvement funding = £395,000**
 - **Teachers' pay and pension costs = £29,000**

6. CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS

No confidential matters were submitted to today's meeting of the Forum.

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No issues were raised at today's meeting. The Schools Forum noted that this would be the final meeting to be attended by Mr Amahwe before leaving the Local Authority and members expressed their gratitude for his service. Mr Sanderson thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at today's meeting..

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(Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)