

**Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Monday, 12 July 2021
Virtual Teams Meeting at 5.00pm**

<p>Present: Maintained Primary Sector: Antoinette Fisher (Governor) Bernie Farkas (Head teacher) Karen Scott (Head teacher) Rob Fletcher John McDermott (Governor) Maintained Special Sector: Andrew Wilkins (Governor) Jane Davenport (Head teacher) Academy Primary Sector: Louise Minter (Head teacher) Lynda Mackay (Governor) Jenny Godsall (Head teacher) Academy Secondary Sector: Marie Murphy (Head teacher) Darren Gelder (Principal) Claire Smith (Head teacher) Pupil Referral Unit: Eleanor Clarke AP Academy: Stephen Steinhaus Specialist Academy No representative Post-16 College: John Callaghan TU Representatives: David Lewis Gillian Clowe Early Years PVI Sector: Gina Godwin Lisa Whitehouse Elected Members Councillor Annette McKenzie Officers of the Council: Tim Browne Steve Fenton Stuart McHale Michele Sadler Observers: Sarah Smith Lynn Clark Clare Thorpe</p>	<p>Dorridge Primary School Blossomfield Infant School Greswold Primary Fordbridge Primary St Alphege Juniors Hazel Oak Special School Reynolds Cross Special School Streetsbrook EY&I Academy Knowle CofE Academy Knowles CofE Academy St Peters RC Academy Grace Academy Tudor Grange Academy Triple Crown Centre Solihull AP Academy Solihull College TU Representative NEU Whitesmore/Wise Owls Nursery Tender Years Nursery Assistant Director, Inclusion & Additional Needs Head of Business & Performance Childrens Services Finance Manager Head of Inclusion Service Church of England, Birmingham Marston Green Juniors Langley Secondary Academy</p>
<p>Chairperson: Antoinette Fisher – Dorridge Primary School Vice Chairperson: Darren Gelder - Grace Academy Minutes: Alison McWilliam, Senior Forum Administrator</p>	

Item		Action																		
1	<p>Apologies for Absence and Welcome Apologies were received from:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Ben Taylor</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Head teacher</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Our Lady of the Wayside</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Charlotte Shadbolt</td> <td>Governor</td> <td>Heart of England Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Geoff Harley-Mason</td> <td>Governor</td> <td>Arden Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paul Jackson</td> <td>Observer</td> <td>Castle Bromwich Junior School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Councillor Richard Holt</td> <td>Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills</td> <td>SMBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louise Rees</td> <td>Director for Children, Education and Skills</td> <td>SMBC</td> </tr> </table>	Ben Taylor	Head teacher	Our Lady of the Wayside	Charlotte Shadbolt	Governor	Heart of England Academy	Geoff Harley-Mason	Governor	Arden Academy	Paul Jackson	Observer	Castle Bromwich Junior School	Councillor Richard Holt	Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills	SMBC	Louise Rees	Director for Children, Education and Skills	SMBC	
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2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting (19.5.21) The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
3	<p>Matters' Arising All matters arising had been actioned or appeared as agenda items.</p>	
4	<p>Cabinet Member's Items - Councillor Richard Holt Unfortunately, Cllr Holt was unable to attend the meeting.</p>	
5	<p>Assistant Director's Items - Tim Browne <i>Reference 'SEND Progress Update and Future Improvement Plans' 17 June report to Full Cabinet; 'SEND Activity' document and 'Solihull SEND Update' powerpoint (copy attached to minutes)</i> TB talked through the Powerpoint presentation and made the following additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Morris has been appointed Head of the Early Years' Service • Michele Sadler has been appointed Head of the Inclusion Service • Additional announcements will be made after the end of term and a briefing note will be circulated to schools prior to term starting in September. • The SEND framework is taking shape and improvements are starting to become evident. • The Service is committed to having a formal Joint Additional Needs Strategy in place in Autumn 2021. • TB thanked Charlotte Jones and Amanda Hana for driving the improvements forward. • TB expressed concern about Solihull's lack of specialist provision capacity and how we deal with the additional pressure this will bring. The Specialist Commissioning Strategy is being developed. • The DfE SEND Review is likely to put additional pressure on LAs and schools. This is expected to be delayed further. • The SEND service is now six months into its five-year improvement journey and a lot of ground has been covered during that time. <p>TB invited questions and comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AF felt that an enormous amount of work had been done very quickly, but asked members to reflect on how it feels in schools and settings. ➤ GG – it has been an exceedingly difficult year for her nursery and its parents, mainly due to lack of communication and listening, particularly when there has been a need for specialist provision. This has caused families to become very upset and unsure where to turn. It is imperative to get the communication right if we want to improve parental confidence. ➤ TB – a number of factors have caused difficulties - turnover and insufficiency of staff, insufficient specialist places and a 25% increase in EHCP requests between February and May. However, the right framework is now in place and this, together with a quality and stable workforce, should make a difference, but TB appreciated GG's comments. ➤ DG – north Solihull schools had hoped we would be further forward by now as regards relationships and people to call on; he agreed with GG and felt that young people were being 'passed around a bit'. DG felt that, despite changes at strategic level, which he fully supported, assurances were needed that the operational side would be quickly embedded so that schools can see positive action and outcomes. ➤ TB – agreed the importance of ensuring strategic changes translate to the front line, at a time of increasing demand. However, pushing forward is reliant on a stable workforce and the service is struggling to fill posts quickly enough (SMBC is looking at ways to respond to this through its Workforce Strategy). It is anticipated the new posts will be filled by September. ➤ JG – the same difficulties are being experienced in south Solihull for the same reasons. Whilst appreciating TB's comments, JG felt it vital that we acknowledge and stress the difficulties on all sides; it is extremely challenging for schools and getting worse and a lot of families are bearing the brunt of this. There is a lot to be pleased about moving forward, but as yet it is difficult to see the impact of service improvements. ➤ JD (via chat) –these are equally challenging times for special schools. 	<p>attached</p> <p>NOTE</p>

- AF – it is vital to continue getting the message out to all stakeholders that the LA is putting significant improvements in place, although the impact may not be immediately evident.
- RF – raised a number of points. Despite the range of improvements, the LA has not acknowledged that schools and leaders have not yet seen any impact. He raised concern at the push for mainstream schools to be more inclusive, but has not heard yet how schools would be supported to do this. He sought assurance that the AP Strategy would come to fruition.
- TB – gave assurance that Solihull’s previous lack of a coherent AP offer would be rectified; plans for sixth day provision through Solihull Academy are taking shape and an AP Strategy will be drawn up, including consultation with schools in Autumn term.

6 Group Reports

Finance Work Group - David Lewis

Members accepted the report with no questions.

EdSEND Group - Louise Minter

Members accepted the report with no questions.

Capital Work Group - Andrew Wilkins

It was noted that Anthony Watson had retired from SMBC and that officers Peter Carroll and Philip Dawes would take up this work in the short term. There were no questions.

SSSAB - Louise Minter

It was proposed that during the new academic year, collaborative arrangements would move from five collaboratives to three, reflecting the locality arrangements being put in place for other LA services. Consultation with schools on this proposal will take place next year. Members accepted the report with no questions.

7 Admin Items - Alison McWilliam

2021-22 Meeting Dates

The dates have been circulated and are available on the website at LINK: [SchoolsForum](#)
Meetings will continue to be held virtually until further notice.

2021-22 Membership

There are still a few vacancies to fill, particularly for secondary academy governors and AMc will pick this up in Autumn term.

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair

AF and DG had expressed their willingness to continue for a further term and, in the absence of other nominations, were duly appointed.

8 Chair's Items - Antoinette Fisher

AF thanked Geoff Harley-Mason, Rob Fletcher and John Dwyer for their support of Forum in recent years as they step down from the group.

AF thanked Councillor Ken Meeson, former Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills, who will be invested as Solihull’s Mayor on 25 July.

AF thanked key SMBC officers for their support of Forum – Linda Sheridan, Lois Brough and Louise Rees, who are retiring (or have retired) from SMBC.

AF welcomed Lynn Clark (HT at Marston Green Juniors), Clare Thorpe (HT at Langley Secondary Academy) and Paul Jackson (CofG at Castle Bromwich Juniors) as new or returning members and Councillor Richard Holt, recently appointed as Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills.

AF thanked members and officers for their support of Solihull’s children, young people and families in what has been an unprecedented and difficult year and wished them a restful summer break.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 4 October 2021 at 5.00pm Virtual Teams Meeting

LINK

AMc