

# Solihull Schools Forum

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**Minutes of meeting**

**5pm**

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

SMBC Civic Suite Room 1

Homer Rd, Solihull B91 9SE

<b>Member Category</b>	<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Attendance</b> (Y/N/ Apols)
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Lynn Clark	Marston Green Juniors (Unity)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Bernie Farkas	Blossomfield Infants (Synergy)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Karen Scott	Greswold Primary (Mosaic)	N
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Richard Marshall	Oak Cottage (Evolve)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	John McDermott	St Alphege Inf & Junior (Synergy)	N
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Antoinette Fisher <b>CHAIR</b>	Dorridge Primary (Rurals)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Donna Luck	Merstone School	N
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Paul Jackson	Castle Bromwich Junior School (North)	N
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Louise Minter	Streetsbrook I&EY Academy, (Synergy)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Jenny Godsall	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Ben Taylor	Our Lady of the Wayside (Evolve)	N
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Lynda Mackay	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Claire Smith (P)	Tudor Grange (Synergy)	N
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Charlotte Shadbolt (G)	Heart of England (Rurals)	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or	Darren Gelder (P) <b>VICE CHAIR</b>	Grace Academy (Unity)	Y

governors) Inc. AP Academy			
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stephen Steinhaus (P)	Solihull AP Academy	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stuart Shelton	St Peters RC (Synergy)	N
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Clare Thorpe (HT)	Langley Secondary (Evolve)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Andrew Best (G)	Smith's Wood Secondary Academy (Fairfax MAT)	N
REPRESENTATIVE OF MAINTAINED SPECIALIST PROVISION (1) attend on rota basis	Andy Simms	Hazel Oak	N
REPRESENTATIVE OF SPECIALIST ACADEMIES (1)	Trevor Scott	Castlewood School	N
REPRESENTATIVE OF PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (1)	Eleanor Clarke	Triple Crown Centre	Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Annette McKenzie (Conservative)		Apologies
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Michael Gough (Conservative)		Apologies
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Andy Hodgson (Green)		Apologies
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	David Lewis	TU Rep	Y
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gareth Eastham	NASUWT	N
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gary Woodhouse (Substitute Member)	GMB	N
REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Gina Godwin	Whitesmore Neighbourhood Nursery (Wise Owls)	Y

REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Lisa Whitehouse	Tender Years	Y
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Lindsey Stewart	Solihull College	N
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Dr Martin Sullivan	Sixth Form College	N
OBSERVERS	Peter Davis	Diocesan Education Service (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham)	N
OBSERVERS	Sarah Smith	Education for Birmingham, The Church of England	N
OBSERVERS	Nicole Fowles	Coleshill Heath School	y
OBSERVERS	Matthew Godwin	Grace Academy	y
Officers (attend as required)			
Acting DCS	Tim Browne		N
Head of Commissioning for Learning	Steve Fenton		Y
Head of Inclusion	Michele Sadler		N
School Place Planning Team Leader	Ann Pearson		N
Childrens Services Finance Manager	Sarah Cheale		Y
SMBC Senior Accountant	Verity Dixon		Apologies
Head of SEND 0-25	Charlotte Jones		N
Clerk	Suzanna Corrigan		Y

**Meeting Minutes:**

Item	Minute	Action
1	<p><b><u>Apologies and welcome</u></b></p> <p>1.1 Apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charlotte Shadbolt</li><li>• Councillor Andy Hodgson</li><li>• Councillor Annette Mc Kenzie</li><li>• Councillor Michael Gough</li><li>• Lynda Mackay</li><li>• Verity Dixon</li></ul> <p>1.2 Welcome to new members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donna Luck (Merstone)</li><li>• Stuart Shelton (St. Peter's)</li></ul>	
2	<p><b><u>Confirmation of Chair</u></b></p> <p>2.1 Steve Fenton proposed Antoinette Fisher</p> <p>2.2 Darren Gelder seconded</p> <p>2.3 Antoinette Fisher appointed as Chair</p>	
3	<p><b><u>Confirmation of Vice Chair</u></b></p> <p>3.1 Antoinette Fisher proposed Darren Gelder</p> <p>3.2 Louise Minter seconded</p> <p>3.3 Darren Gelder appointed as Vice Chair</p>	
4	<p><b><u>Farewell to members</u></b></p> <p>4.1 Farewell to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amanda Mordey (Merstone)</li><li>• Andrew Wilkins (Hazel oak)</li><li>• Karen Scott (Greswold)</li><li>• Marie Murphy (St. Peter's)</li></ul>	
5	<p><b><u>Minutes of last meeting (12.07.22)</u></b></p> <p>5.1 Minutes agreed</p>	
6	<p><b>Matters Arising from 12th July Meeting</b></p>	

**Matters arising – Alternative provision**

6.1 Steve Fenton

- a) Informed consultation held with stakeholders in July 2022
- b) Wider consultation with all interested parties, including schools and parents, during the second half of this term
- c) Cabinet approval by Dec 2022/Jan2023

6.2 Antoinette Fisher recognised numbers of head teachers attending this evening due to the strength of feeling around alternative provision.

6.3 Darren Gelder expressed the following points:

- a) We are potentially in the worst position we have ever been in.
- b) Nursery, primary & secondary colleagues at the end of their tether.
- c) Greater complexity of needs in school that we are expected to deal with, take responsibility for and ultimately accountability with very little external support.
- d) Minutes from last 12 months state that there is an increase in provision and that there are challenges within that.
- e) We are dealing with these challenges daily asking for support and it's not there.
- f) A failure within this local authority to support schools and vulnerable young people.
- g) No alternative.
- h) Child protection meeting cancelled half an hour before the meeting as a report has not been completed.
- i) Looking for support and it is not coming therefore the child is let down.
- j) Reducing budgets to meet the same challenges.
- k) Genuine concern about the safety and welfare of both young children, staff and leaders within our borough.
- l) We have a legal duty of care.
- m) What can we do?
- n) Request permission to open the discussion to the forum.

6.4 Antoinette Fisher opened the Forum to discuss alternative provision.

6.5 Nicole Fowles stated that:

- a) We are starting to see tiny actions in the right direction but only relating to existing high needs.

- b) Children as young as 5/6 are being excluded.
- c) Staff and children physically hurt daily.
- d) First and foremost, we must deal with the crisis then we can get to early intervention.

6.6 Antoinette Fisher shared concerns about the children but also head teachers and staff who are leaving the profession. She was disappointed that the relevant people are not in attendance and that we need to address this with the people who can do something about it.

6.7 Lynn Clark shared disappointment and frustration that the people that matter and who can do something about it are not in attendance and had the following questions

- a) What is the point of the meeting?
- b) Why has it been organised on a Council meeting night?
- c) What values are you placing on this meeting for us to have a robust conversation?

6.8 Clare Thorpe reported on a recent serious incident that happened in her school yesterday (10.10.22) police involved which resulted in a 12-year-old child being arrested and permanently excluded. Traumatic for all involved. Clare asked the Forum the following question:

- a) Where do we go? AP cost £17,500 per year this is unaffordable and there are no other services to support.

6.9 Richard Marshall identified with all previous points made by Head Teachers. He stated that the system does work, sometimes, but it takes a lot of effort and time and the we are all solution focused and usually find a way, but those options are just to close a gap.

6.10 Gina Godwin previously raised a point about children being asked to go into a mainstream provision who are not suited to the setting. She expressed that she has had to fight to get 3 children specialist provision. Gina stated that the numbers of children needing specialist provision is increasing. Up from 3 to 7 in the last 2 years over 2 small nurseries. Very complex children with very high needs. COVID has impacted some but not all.

6.11 Bernie Farkas agreed with GG not all due to COVID. She had carried out a nursery observation (11.10.22) which showed 8/30 children in one class had indicators of being on the autistic spectrum. These children will eventually need EHCP going forward. Bernie

questioned the outcomes from The Violence Reduction Steering Group as she had attended these meetings.

6.12 Louise Minter answered the previous question by stating that the Ed Psych involved in the VRST is no longer with the authority. She believes the work has disappeared.

6.13 Bernie Farkas made the following response:

- a) Brought to Solihull Council's attention that governors should be copied into any correspondence regarding consultations – this is now happening.
- b) No consultation as final line within correspondence states that we have a duty to admit the young person.
- c) Increase security at my school (at a cost) to prevent children from trying to escape.
- d) Staff physically abused (chairs thrown, hair pulled out)
- e) Perfect storm building as staff will go off with work related stress.
- f) Other children's learning impacted.
- g) Where do I go?

6.14 Nicole Fowles shared the following information

- a) One of our most complex children has been moved 10 times in 9 months
- b) What does it say about us, as a collective, that we cannot support our most vulnerable young learners?
- c) What resources do we have to match her need?

6.15 Bernie Farkas stated that early intervention is needed from a much younger age (2.5 years).

6.16 Lynn Clark shared the following:

- a) Have a child working at 16-21 months in a junior school (min age 7).
- b) Met with Brian Sidwell and Amanda Hana.
- c) No school consulted could meet the needs of the child.
- d) Result is that the child is at a completely inappropriate school.
- e) Resources had to be created, at a cost of £15,000 to the school, for this child.
- f) Eventually the data and statistics will speak for themselves.



6.17 Louise Minter shared her concerns about not being listened to and that as a collective we feel that we are failing children.

6.18 Darren Gelder made the following comments

- a) Previously expressed our feelings to the councillors with the potential of the media becoming involved.
- b) No further forward and in a worse situation.
- c) Every single person involved in whatever level of education is saying that the system is not working.
- d) There is no confidence within the local authority to support schools.
- e) What is it going to take to make something happen?  
Something will happen.

6.19 Antoinette Fisher fully supportive in all that is being said but not sure how productive this meeting is tonight.

6.20 Gina Godwin wanted to know what the answer was – How do we get the message to the people who need to hear it?

6.21 Darren Gelder stated that our voice needs to be heard by the right people. There is a failure within the local authority to support the young people within this borough.

6.22 Antoinette Fisher apologised for putting you people that position, not intentional.

6.23 Stephen Steinhaus made the following comments;

- a) Largest AP provider in the country.
- b) We will be at full capacity by Christmas (Dec 2022).
- c) Had discussions with the LA and there is an opportunity to increase capacity.
- d) We have the Green Paper, commissioning agreement, the capacity, empty buildings and the will.
- e) We need to come together as a collective to join the dots as children are falling through the system.
- f) The pain and frustration felt by all to help children.
- g) Collectively that frustration will bear solutions.

6.24 Lynn Clark shared the following:

- a) Recently had 2 children go to a SOLAR appointment.
- b) One diagnosed with ASD and ADHD within that meeting.
- c) Second one, parents told their child needs 1:1 provision in school.

	<p>d) Feel like there is no joined up thinking with healthcare professionals thus creating, for us, difficult conversations with difficult and challenging parents.</p> <p>e) Requested minutes from an escalation. Minutes stated that Head Teachers feedback when they escalate. I have never done that in my 25 years as a head.</p> <p>f) <b>Question:</b> What is the procedure for schools feeding back on their escalations?</p> <p>6.25 Eleanor Clarke was frustrated that SOLAR do not contact the school first as it puts us in a position where they have recommended a provision to the parent, but we can't physically meet that need. She also shared that there has been no MACE meeting minutes for 18 months and questioned how can we follow up on actions if there are no agreed minutes?</p> <p>6.26 Jenny Godsall stated that we need to escalate our feelings collectively. We need to invite an audience that goes way beyond the LA such as MPs and the press. We are collectively saying that children are not safe, and that the education of our children is under threat. This will cause reputational damage to the quality of education provided by Solihull.</p> <p>6.27 Antoinette Fisher suggested we adjourn due to the strength of feeling around the table and look to produce a group where everyone can have their say with the right people at the table.</p> <p>6.28 Darren Gelder stated that as professionals we are saying that, unless something is done, harm will come to young people in the borough. We have been lucky so far, but we cannot rely on luck to continue doing the job that we're doing.</p> <p>6.29 Louise Minter suggested that a starting point could be the group of representatives from each collaborative rather than creating a new group.</p> <p>6.30 Antoinette Fisher adjourned the meeting</p>	<p>AF</p>
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