

Solihull Schools Forum



Minutes of Meeting

5pm

Thursday 26th January 2023

SMBC Civic Suite Room 1

Homer Rd, Solihull B91 9SE

Member Category	Member Name	Institution	Attendance (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)	Apologies
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)	Apologies
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	John McDermott	St Alphege Inf & Junior (Synergy)	Apologies
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Antoinette Fisher	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)	Apologies
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Lynda Mackay	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Claire Smith (P)	Tudor Grange (Synergy)	Y
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 governors) Inc. AP Academy	Darren Gelder (P)	Grace Academy (Unity)	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stephen Steinhaus (P)	Solihull AP Academy	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stuart Shelton	St Peters RC (Synergy)	Y
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	Y
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)		Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Michael Gough (Conservative)		Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Andy Hodgson (Green)		N
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	David Lewis	TU Rep	Y
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gareth Eastham	NASUWT	Y
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	N
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)	Apologies
OBSERVERS	Sarah Smith	Education for Birmingham, The Church of England	N
	Helen McEvoy	Blossomfield Infants	Y
	Lee Jamieson	Vice Principal Solihull College	Y
<i>Officers (attend as required)</i>			
Acting DCS	Tim Browne		Y
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		Apologies
SMBC Senior Accountant	Verity Dixon		Y
Head of SEND 0-25	Charlotte Jones		N
Clerk	Suzanna Corrigan		Y
Lead Administrator	Emma Stoney		Y

Item	Minutes	Action
1.	Apologies: - As recorded above.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting (28.11.2022) 2.1 Minutes agreed.	
3.	Matters arising 3.1 Time of the meeting to be changed to either the morning or afternoon. Forum Resolve: <i>Next Forum Meeting (25th May) to take place during the day. Time to be confirmed.</i>	AF/ES
4.	Cabinet Member update – Councillor Michael Gough 4.1 Antoinette Fisher welcomed Councillor Michael Gough to the meeting, noting the strength of feeling around the table over issues of Councillor attendance. 4.2 Councillor Michael Gough apologised for not attending previous meetings due to work and council commitments but will endeavour to attend future meetings. 4.3 Peter Campbell, Director of Children’s Services (DCS), is now firmly in position. 4.4 Ofsted report is now in the public domain. It is disappointing but we accept the outcome. There is an improvement plan in place. The council are committed to creating more positive outcomes for children. 4.5 Sir Alan’s report (as Children’s Commissioner) is now complete. It will be sent to the Department for Education (DfE) in approximately two weeks. Once the DfE have made their recommendations it will be published in the public domain. 4.6 Councillor Michael Gough will be meeting with Tim Browne and other heads of service regarding supporting behaviour in schools. 4.7 Antoinette Fisher stated that Schools Forum is solution focused and supports the Local Authority (LA).	
5.	Assistant Director for Education update: Peer Review & Developing Better Values (DBV) - Tim Browne 5.1 Formal feedback from the recent Peer Review, is expected in one week. 5.2 Reviewers were impressed with the Head Teachers and their ‘can do’ attitude. 5.3 They have seen significant improvements in all aspects of work and those involved know the next steps required. 5.4 Reviewers thought our additional needs strategy was right. Areas of development are: Specialist Provision; and High Needs budget. We have action plans in place for these. 5.5 In regard to ‘Delivering Better Value’ (DBV), we have been analysing the issues in growth in Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). Key things raised were: inclusivity; and how services can support schools - submitting a bid to the DfE for £1 million. 5.6 They noted that we don’t have enough Specialist Provision, although this has increased 19% over the last five years. 5.7 The Heights (new school) will be opening in the Autumn Term. 5.8 We should hear about our additional free school builds in the Spring. 5.9 Reviewers thought our additional needs strategy was right. Areas of development are: Specialist Provision; and High Needs budget. We have action plans in place for these.	

	<p><u>Questions/comments</u></p> <p>a) Antoinette Fisher wanted clarity on when and where the action plans from both the Ofsted inspection and, the SEND Peer Review would be shared.</p> <p>b) Tim Browne stated that both will go through SSSAB and School Forum in due course.</p>	AF/ES
6.	<p>School Funding update: 2023-24 - Steve Fenton</p> <p>6.1 School Funding Update: Steve Fenton shared the main highlights of this report, regarding the funding settlement received from the Government on 16th December 2022.</p> <p>6.2 Table 3.2 shows that the overall Schools Block Settlement (including Supplementary Grant and a new Mainstream Supplementary Additional Grant (MSAG) has increased by 6.1%.</p> <p>6.3 Table 3.3 breaks down the £11.7 million into 2.7% increase for the School Needs Block and 3.4% in the MSAG grant.</p> <p>6.4 Point 3.5 in this report shows a positive outcome for Solihull Schools. The Autumn settlement is an add-on to the July announcements, which stand in full.</p> <p>6.5 We have published a school specific MSAG calculator for all schools to use, and the provisional school budget workbook (APT) has been published.</p> <p>6.6 We have an additional £1.6 million in the High Needs Block (HNB) from the Autumn announcement. The headline figure for the HNB is £3.5 million which is an increase of 9.3%. A large percentage of this will be going directly to specialist settings. MLD schools, to meet a national MFG will get an 8% increase in top-up rates (roughly £30,000 per school).</p> <p>6.7 Further to this, all specialist schools and alternative provision will receive a share of the £1.6 million additional funding, which is the equivalent of MSAG for specialist provision.</p> <p>6.8 Special schools will continue to receive Teacher Pay and Pension Grants (TPPG).</p> <p>6.9 The report recommends that special schools receive the same base level increase in funding as maintained schools, so a 3% increase in the top-up rates.</p> <p>6.10 Appendix 1 gives sight of mainstream school budgets for next year.</p> <p><u>Questions/comments</u></p> <p>a) David Lewis commented on the disappointing growth in money – there are problems with growth and although we have a three-year loan, he didn't see the logic in cutting the growth.</p> <p>b) Steve Fenton stated that it is formula-led and that Ann Pearson, School Place Planner would be examining the figures in due course.</p> <p><i>Forum Resolve</i> <i>To recommend the Cabinet Member give 3% increase to special schools and alternative provisions for 2023-24.</i></p>	AP

7. Early Years Funding: formula change proposal - Steve Fenton

- 7.1 This report highlighted two elements for Forum to consider:
- a) the government settlement for Early Years Block (EYB) of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and
 - b) the option to incorporate Teacher Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG) into the local Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF).
- 7.2 There is an increase of 8.3% in grant levels. Point 3.4 explains how this is divided up: £363,000 of which is TPPG.
- 7.3 Table 3.6 sets out the provisional recommended funding rates. These has been communicated to settings to help them with their budgets.
- 7.4 The rates follow the principals agreed between Cabinet Members and Forum to maximise the headline base rate for three- to four-year-old grant.
- 7.5 The government has confirmed their decision to implement several technical changes to the Early Years National Funding Formula. Solihull has gained some funding from this.
- 7.6 The government has also confirmed that they are going to mainstream TPPG.
- 7.7 The government have made it clear to Local Authorities that they must look at the local level and the previous use of the grant. They have given us a mechanism in which to do this which doesn't require further legislation.
- 7.8 Steve Fenton has modelled three options and brought them to the Finance WG (see points 5.10-5.12 in the report for the three options). After some deliberation, and following feedback to the consultation, Officers continued to believe that option 2 would be the best option.
- 7.9 Not a huge response had been received from the consultation. Important matters raised by the private and voluntary settings. Pertinent point from this related to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Level 6 qualifications and how the pay supplement should cover all level 6 staff. Currently 51% of our settings have a level 6 qualification and this is a significant deviation from maximising the headline rate. This could open another option which would cause an administrative and auditory burden for, perhaps, little gain.
- 7.10 Another possible option is to give schools continuity for pay element for next year only, but it only represented £1,000 per school on average.

Questions/comments

- a) Gina Godwin stated that schools would receive roughly 20p more than Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) settings. This is unfair because those type of settings may have level 6 staff but not QTS. Some independent settings with QTS staff, may not pay TPPG but are still getting this grant. How can you prove that schools have always got QTS staff teaching? With the rise in hourly costs, Gina's setting has roughly a £2,000 shortfall a month. With the extra £1,000 Gina would be £1,000 short a month. Due to this, Gina discussed having to cancel consultation support for employment law, as although she would need this service, it would become unaffordable. Gina stressed she would be unable to raise any other funding other than that received from the government. Many other PVI settings are in a similar position.
- b) Stuart Shelton stated that he had witnessed non QTS staff teaching in some primary schools.
- c) Steve Fenton replied that it was unfortunate, and certainly not intended by the LA to cause any divisions between settings. However the government had made clear they expected LAs to respond to this mainstreaming of grants. The LA did agree there was a justifiable case for pension element – it was significant for schools, less compelling for the reasons Gina makes about the pay element. Only settings with a QTS present at each 3-4 grant funded session would receive the supplement. Settings would sign a

	<p>declaration each term. The Family Information Service (FIS) are confident that they could administer a system, but it is not yet in place.</p> <p>d) Eleanor Clarke thought that the school census should show the breakdown of QTS staff clearly.</p> <p>e) Antoinette Fisher made the point that this clearly shows the misunderstanding of how Early Years is delivered, especially in private settings.</p> <p>f) Jenny Godsall stated that her support staff contributions are significantly higher than her teaching staff and she has had to budget for this from her own school budget: it's a tight balancing act. If we were to do something radically different to what is suggested and therefore give the same to all 51% of settings, it would wash out the impact for any setting. Is there any way we can make a significant financial contribution to the PVI settings and still stay true to the guidance and rules?</p> <p>g) Steve Fenton stated that the way to treat all settings fairly would be to give no supplement at all, but this would contradict the government's clear message, and would not be fair to settings receiving considerably less funding than currently.</p> <p>h) Louise Minter stated that it is disappointing that our Early Years is so significantly underfunded. The money is so important in this area, and it just isn't there.</p> <p>i) Antoinette Fisher asked if there was a route to express School Forum's disenchantment with this.</p> <p>j) Councillor Michael Gough noted all that has been said and as a local council we can petition the government.</p> <p>k) Steve Fenton stated that, to be fair, the DfE had ensured this funding remained in the system.</p> <p>l) Antoinette Fisher stated that this report highlighted an issue of underfunding in Early Years that needs further discussion.</p> <p>Forum Resolve <i>Forum agreed to recommend Option 2 of the report to the Cabinet Member.</i></p>	<p>CMG</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Alternative Provision Funding: 2023-24 – Steve Fenton</p> <p>8.1 This report brings attention to two matters:</p> <p>a) issues raised by secondary heads at a commissioning meeting concerning Solihull Academy, and</p> <p>b) an Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy key action relating to funding of settings.</p> <p>8.2 It is an enabling report which should clear a way forward for future/further developments in AP, it is not a report dealing with all AP issues.</p> <p>8.3 Steve Fenton indicated the report was detailed and reminded everyone how AP works. If we create more spaces at special schools, our High Needs Block goes up, but if we create more places in AP, there is no change in funding.</p> <p>8.4 Secondary head teachers collectively own Solihull Academy. If a pupil is dual-rolled, the school gets all the funding for that child which buys the place at Solihull Academy. If all pupils go on the role at Solihull Academy that would be a 110-pupil hit on the High Needs Block.</p> <p>8.5 The LA is under extreme pressure in relation to AP and is open-minded to how barriers to accessing provision can be moderated or removed.</p> <p>8.6 In the second part of the report, table 3.3.2 shows the AP provision for the LA in full. They are all 100% funded within the High Needs Block.</p> <p>8.7 Where a child is dual-rolled - the school gets the funding for the pupil and it seems fair an element of this is used to contribute to the AP cost.</p> <p>8.8 Discussions with schools indicates that the cost of AP can be a barrier. We need to be careful about setting the charges relating to the cost of the</p>	

provision, e.g. by a fixed charge per setting, which might be different for different provisions.

- 8.9 In the future, the system could evolve if providers felt they wanted to use the same system as Solihull Academy.
- 8.10 For a dual-rolled pupil accessing provision on a short-term basis, there would be a contribution from the school. The contribution would be similar to the excluded pupil deduction but based on number of weeks in the provision pro-rata to 39 weeks.
- 8.11 Finance WG had agreed the proposal for schools to contribute pupil funding was a reasonable approach.
- 8.12 Tim Browne wanted to mention mainstream top-ups. We can fund a 3% rise next year with a further 3% linking it with our DBV work.
- 8.13 Steve Fenton stated that the High Needs Block has gone up 9%: significant parts of this is committed to meeting government funding guarantees special schools and alternative provision settings, such as the minimum funding guarantee of 3% and a 3.4% increase of additional funding to meet cost pressures (Autumn budget statement).
- 8.14 A key point arising from national research, states that authorities not facing pressures from High Needs Block have found a way to cycle the additional needs funding into schools to support inclusion, and TB's proposal could be a way into this.

Questions/comments - Part one of the report:

- a) Claire Smith stated that a subsidy would help but AP is full.
- b) Clare Thorpe pointed out that the waiting lists for AP are long, especially for Year 9 pupils.
- c) Stuart Shelton raised the point about managed moves. He has had experience of this in Birmingham where schools would meet regularly at a panel and manage moves between them. This kept exclusions down. He also questioned if there was AP for primary. Issues manifest in primary - could they be picked up earlier? This may ease the pressure in secondaries.
- d) Clare Thorpe agreed that this is something that needs to be discussed.
- e) Steve Fenton stated that due to the government change in the admissions code managed moves could risk being illegal: so agreed would be ratified at Fair Access Panel (FAP) to make them legal in Solihull.
- f) Councillor Michael Gough stated that a main aim of the LA is to reduce/stop permanent exclusions. We need to deal with the problem: early intervention is needed and understand there can be links to wider social issues.
- g) Tim Browne stated that the LA was putting money into early help teams and multi-agencies in children's social care. We are also in the process of commissioning some primary AP from the Autumn.

Part two of the report:

- h) Eleanor Clarke questioned the provision of medical needs and what if a school couldn't afford it, doesn't the LA have to provide it?
- i) Steve Fenton stated that roles and responsibilities were complicated – The provision would be provided regardless of expense. It is invisible to school and panels. The LA has a duty as does the school. This report caps expense for a school. It is the LA's responsibility to secure the provision after a certain time.
- j) Tim Browne stated that Ofsted would primarily hold the school to account, rather than the LA.
- k) Claire Smith questioned where the money goes.
- l) Steve Fenton stated that it was like the SEN top-up in reverse, the top-up would be to the high needs block not the specific setting (as the LA was paying for that in full).

	<p>m) Lynn Clark questioned how one form entry school could afford this. We are spending more in schools with unpredictable and violent pupils.</p> <p>n) Jenny Godsall stated that it was unlikely that this would be budgeted for. If you have already spent that money on specialist provision for the child, where do you find it from? We might need a mechanism to support smaller settings. We should not be turning our back on these schools.</p> <p>o) Steve Fenton stated that a LA Officer could not make this decision. There are a range of provisions in Solihull and pathways before alternative provision is needed.</p> <p>p) Lynda McKay stated that Finance WG agreed the Solihull Academy subsidy for one year.</p> <p>q) Steve Fenton would prefer to say it is ongoing dialogue with heads. It would be brought back to the cabinet yearly.</p> <p>r) Regarding Tim Browne's comments on mainstream top-ups, Louise Minter stated that it is about having the right people around the table to listen. She will bring this up at SSSAB, Head Teachers Breakfast Briefings and Heads Partnership.</p> <p>s) Antoinette Fisher commented on trainee clinicians at the Peer Review – this is something worth exploring.</p> <p>Forum Resolve <i>Forum agrees to LA subsidising places at Solihull Academy commissioned by secondary schools.</i> <i>Forum agrees to schools contributing to the cost of alternative provision when the pupil is on the roll of a mainstream school.</i></p>	<p>LM/TB</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Work Group reports:</p> <p>a) Finance Group 10-01-23 - David Lewis</p> <p>9a.1 David Lewis highlighted his report. No real change, with an anticipated deficit of £3.5 million and an accumulative deficit of £16.6 million.</p> <p>9a.2 Family Information Service report – provides an excellent service, listed within the report. Recommended that all read the report.</p> <p>9a.3 Lynn Clark raised an attendance issue. This was passed on to the Head of Inclusion.</p> <p>9a.4 Tim Browne stated that he would look into the attendance issue.</p> <p>9a.5 Louise Minter stated that this would also be discussed at Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board (SSSAB).</p> <p>b) EdSend - Louise Minter (verbal report)</p> <p>9b.1 Antoinette Fisher chaired this meeting and will send the minutes out with minutes from Schools Forum.</p> <p>c) SSSAB (Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board) & Head Teachers Conference – Louis Minter (verbal report)</p> <p>9c.1 Welcomed Emma Stoney as Lead Forum Administrator and looked forward to more support with the administration.</p> <p>9c.2 Peter Campbell gave updates.</p> <p>9c.3 Tim Browne updated on the Peer SEND Review.</p> <p>9c.4 The Heads Partnership in the coming weeks will cover inclusion. This will lead into the inclusion audit.</p> <p>9c.5 Next meeting will be discussion around SEND and inclusion.</p>	<p>TB/LM</p> <p>AF/ES/SC</p>

	<p>9c.6 Still money in SSSAB.</p> <p>9c.7 Deputy Head Teachers Conference scheduled in March.</p> <p>9c.8 Supporting peer to peer well-being sessions.</p>							
10.	<p>AOB</p> <p>10.1 No actions.</p> <p>10.2 Antoinette Fisher thanked all for attending and will look to move the next meeting taking place during the day and having the sandwiches in the meeting room.</p> <p>10.3 Antoinette Fisher thanked Councillor Gough on behalf of Forum for attending this evening.</p> <p>10.4 Meeting closed at 7.10pm.</p>	AF/ES						
11.	<p>Dates of future meetings:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="276 656 1281 739"> <tr> <td>Schools Forum</td> <td>9.30am Thursday, 25 May 2023</td> <td>Room 1 Civic Suite</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Schools Forum</td> <td>9.30am Thursday, 13 July 2023</td> <td>Room 1 Civic Suite</td> </tr> </table>	Schools Forum	9.30am Thursday, 25 May 2023	Room 1 Civic Suite	Schools Forum	9.30am Thursday, 13 July 2023	Room 1 Civic Suite	
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