



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	8.30AM – THURSDAY 10 May 2018
Venue	COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery
Elected Member	Cllr Paul Brading – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Officers	Brian Pope – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion Barry Downer - Senior Finance Business Partner Brendan Hodson – Senior Accountant Tracey Sanders – Head of Services for Young Children Chris Jones – SEN Service Manager Andrew Briggs – Post 16 Commissioning and Funding Manager Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Robert Dare – Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Matthew Parr-Burman – Island Innovation Federation (<i>Substitute</i>)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

BG welcomed members, officers and observers to the meeting.

- 1.1 Membership Update – Following John Bailey’s resignation from the Schools Forum, Duncan Mills, Executive Headteacher of the Cornerstone Federation, was elected at the Primary Headteachers’ meeting, as a representative of that group.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [22 March 2018](#) be confirmed.

4. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

- 4.1 (Item 4.1) BG informed forum members that she had received a response from the chair of governors at the Island Free School stating that supply is covered internally and trade union support meetings are arranged outside school hours. As such there would be no need to draw down on contributions from other schools.

Action – BG to write to inform Trade Union representatives of the outcome

- 4.2 (Item 4.2) BG had received a reply from the Secretary of State, regarding concerns raised re High Needs Funding, which was read to forum members. The letter outlined the purpose of the National Funding Formula and an additional £1.3 Billion allocated to High Needs funding.

For the IOW the additional funding is expected to bring in approximately £70,000 rising to £150,000 for 2019/20.

BP had discussed issues around the extension of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) up to age 25, with The Rt. Hon Nick Gibb – Minister of State for Education. 149 out of 151 Local Authorities (LAs) are overspent in the High Needs Block – this is a national concern.

Members discussed how the IOW has come to have a higher level of EHCPs than other LAs. A history of poor educational provision is thought to be a contributory factor. Families with children in need of an EHCP are moving from the mainland to the IOW. The number of very young children with high needs is growing both on the IOW and nationally.

Government rules are changing around the health element and how this should be funded/challenged. There should be more focus on intervention, reduction and inclusion to help children develop and prepare young people for later life.

Action – BG and CS to reply to the Secretary of State and maintain correspondence on the subject – copy to Cllr Bob Seeley, MP for the IOW

A report on the number of children with EHCPs by school/college/post 16 provider to be brought to the next meeting

5. 2017/18 SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN [Paper B](#)

BH reported the outturn position, showing an overspend of £654,000 which, with the deficit brought forward and the one-off contribution following audit of the 2016/17 accounts (noted at the last Schools Forum meeting), will result in a total year-end deficit of £702,000. The first budget monitoring report for 2018/19 will be presented at the next Schools Forum meeting on 19 July 2018.

- 5.1 Changes since the report given at the last meeting in March were –

Early Years Block – showing an estimated overspend of £124,000 due to a decrease in the anticipated net adjustment in 2017/18 early years funding (to take place in July 2018) - this is due to changes in the census data, following validation/correction of census returns.

- 5.2 Top-up funding for the Island Learning Centre (ILC) was higher due to an increase in occupancy from 47.1 in 2016/17 to 53.3 in 2017/18. It was noted that 1/3 or more of the students either have an EHCP or are going through the process.

5.3 There was an increase in personal budgets. The overspend was not as great as expected but is set to increase further in future years. This has identified a need for improved accuracy in forecasting.

5.4 EARLY YEARS BLOCK

The estimated Early Years budget report given at the last meeting was based on draft census data, but the changes follow validation of the data. Members were concerned over the discrepancies that had occurred in the completion of census returns. This has identified a clear training need for providers and it was suggested that training should be mandatory, to ensure correct data is submitted. This situation causes considerable extra work for the finance team.

It is anticipated that there will be less of an issue next year, as no further changes to funding in the Early Years Block are expected following the introduction of the 30 hours extended entitlement. However, it was noted that the estimated adjustment is based on draft census data and there can be no certainty until the data is validated.

It was agreed that providers will need clear training and guidance prior to completing the next census return. Guidance will be given at the respective Early Years briefing, and will incorporate the issues that have arisen in completing the 2018 early years census.

Action – A letter to be sent to EY providers from Schools Forum to explain the importance of correct completion of the census return form

5.5 SCHOOL BALANCES

Overall maintained school balances have reduced from £568,000 in 2016/17 to an estimated £182,000 in 2017/18 with 31 schools in surplus and 12 schools in deficit. The position will be clarified at the next meeting in July.

Members asked for further information and a list of school balances and questioned how some schools have large balances whilst others are in deficit. The number of schools moving into deficit is increasing and those with surplus budgets are quickly reducing due to ongoing pressure.

It was outlined that schools have to be sustainable and must produce recovery plans if they are in deficit. In secondary schools there is more flexibility, but finding a way forward is more difficult for primary schools. Surplus places are an ongoing issue and members were concerned about the viability of some schools. Members acknowledged that difficult financial decisions have had to be made at LA level, supported by the Schools Forum, which impact on all schools.

There are competing priorities for school expenditure, but members agreed that ensuring children are safe must be prioritised. School governing bodies need support to ensure close monitoring and strategic overview of their school's budget. External ideas/support would be welcomed by schools and schools need to work together to survive. The number of children in Elective Home Education continues to increase and further impacts on school budgets. Future funding cannot be predicted in the absence of government funding information beyond 2019.

Action – Martin Goff, Head of Information, Transport and Admissions to be invited to the next meeting, to give information on school places and how the LA are planning to reduce surplus places

A breakdown of school balances to be reported at the next meeting on 19 July 2018

BP to attend the next Primary and Secondary Headteacher Briefings

RESOLVED :

THAT the outturn position on the 2017/18 budget be noted.

CJ and AB entered the meeting

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 6.1 A [question had been submitted](#) prior to the meeting regarding the re-designation in 2003 of St George's School (then Watergate School) from taking children with moderate learning difficulties to taking only children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and the resulting impact on provision for high needs pupils. It was felt that this arrangement has not and is not meeting the increasing demand for provision for high needs children and both St George's School and Medina House are full.

The ongoing costs of resourced provision, off-island places, top-up funding and personal budgets was highlighted and could outweigh the cost of opening a new MLD and ASD school on the Island. Schools Forum were asked if opening a new MLD and ASD school could be considered. This would reduce pressure on the High Needs Block, on special schools and on provision for inclusion in mainstream schools.

- 6.2 In response it was noted that the LA is focussed on the current situation, in that the 2 special schools are rated as good and work is ongoing towards additional resourced provision for September 2018. The Post-16 offer includes independent provision such as St Catherine's School.

The IOW has 25.1% pupils in special schools, against a national average of 23.8%. Outcomes for children with EHCPs are broadly in line with national averages.

Off-Island places for children with very complex needs is at 4.3% on the IOW compared to 5.2% nationally.

The Commissioning Unit works to develop provision and challenge high cost placements. There is also a new post tracking and analysing data, to support ongoing review.

TS joined the meeting.

- 6.3 The questioner felt that statistical information may not be helpful as the Island has no land borders. It is easier to seek out-of-county provision on the mainland. Children are waiting for places and there is nowhere to put them. There is also concern that assessments are not robust. The situation impacts on all children, as 1-1 provision for a child may reduce the overall support for a class.

Research shows that children educated at St Georges School have progressed to be functioning adults. There is a need for a special school that works for all, which would also allow the Island Learning Centre to function as it should do as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

- 6.4 It was understood that there is a complex range of issues for discussion and important points had been made. It was confirmed that the LA did consult on the use of high needs capital funding and this is included in the [Local Offer](#) . The LA is committed to making best use of public money and has engaged in the best available options.

- 6.5 The possible cost of providing a further MLD school was discussed. This subject is under national debate and requires considerable evidence and information.

A multi-layer strategy is required, to enable inclusion for young people from age 18+. To achieve this, planning and reviewing EHCPs is necessary from age 12+ to build independence.

It was agreed to involve parents in ongoing debate – sessions are held with parents and the next is to take place in June.

A survey was recently sent out to headteachers and chairs of governors from the Policy and Scrutiny Committee regarding issues relating to the closure of the Autism Diagnostic Research Centre (ARDC) in Southampton, in September 2017 and the impact on IOW schools and children.

6.6 POST-16 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MONITORING

AB gave a presentation showing an overview of post-16 high needs places across the range of providers. He explained briefly how placements are made, taking account of views of the young person and parents/carers. Legislation requires the LA to comply with a request for a specific provider, unless this is deemed unsuitable.

He explained the rigorous procedure that is used for decisions on mainland placements. There is an approved list of independent providers and detailed research is carried out into their suitability with ongoing monitoring and regular reviews.

Regional meetings take place, attended by 19 LAs, to quality assure provision for post-16 students and assess individual providers. The aim is to enable students to gain qualifications, independent living skills, work placements and supported internships.

The IOW has 3.9% young people who are NEET, against a national average of 6%. IOW participation rate is 99.1%

It was confirmed that panels are used for decisions on all out-of-county post-16 placements. The suite of forms used to assist the decision-making process are being reviewed to reinforce the procedure.

It was noted that the IOW College takes students from St Catherine's School and St George's School and achievement rates are higher than that of other learners. Members were interested in overall outcomes for post-16 high needs students, following on from education.

The commissioning team in Hampshire is working on procurement and financial savings for the IOW and Hampshire.

Action – Report on achievement rates of post-16 high needs students and an update from the commissioning team to be brought to the next meeting in July

FW left the meeting

7. MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE

The Schools Forum had requested an update on the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG), and this was given orally. MFG is a protection for schools against changes in per pupil funding and the schools currently receiving high levels of protection started doing so in 2012/13, due to reductions in per pupil funding compared to 2011/12. Looking back over historic records it was not possible to see the specific reasons for each school receiving MFG protection, but as a historic protection following formula change, this is a case of the protection being applied per national policy.

It was confirmed that schools forum will be consulted on the level of MFG protection to be applied as part of deciding the funding formula for 2019/20.

CJ and AB left the meeting.

MFG protection will continue to be allocated to receiving schools as long as it is included in the national funding regulations.

Action – MFG level (-1.5%) to be reviewed at the meeting held on 13 December 2018 for decision by the meeting held on 17 January 2019

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Thursday 19 July 2018 – 8.30am** at Westridge Community learning Centre.

7. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 18 October 2018

Thursday 13 December 2018

Thursday 17 January 2019

Thursday 21 March 2019

8.30am start, all at

Westridge Community Learning Centre, Brading Road, Ryde PO33 1QS

The meeting closed at 10.45am

CHAIR