

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

20th October 2015

MINUTES

Present: Jill Billinge (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	A Moore
E Cogan	M Morris
K Frost	K Podmore
L Ireland	T Quinn
D Marchant	M Walker
J McCallum	L Wheatley
S McNamara	

Non-Schools Group

M Bulmer	S Higginson
I Harris	N Prance

In Attendance:

S Ashley	J Hassall
P Arista	P Hughes
S Bailey	L Jameson
S Blevins	I McGrady
C Chow	A Roberts
Cllr W Clements	Cllr P A Smith
A Davies	S Talbot
R Ghataora	P Ward

Apologies:

M Brown	B Jordan
S Davies	J Pearson
J Devine	D Stenhouse
A Donelan	A Whiteley (Vice Chair)
S Duggan	P Young
C Hughes	

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Jill Billinge was elected as Chair and Adrian Whitely was elected as Vice Chair

2. Minutes from the Meeting held on 15th July 2015

The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Free School Meals

Tricia Hughes described the current free school meal (FSM) processes and the uptake for Wirral Schools which relies on a parental request and the completion of paperwork. Following changes in benefits and the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) the FSM uptake has reduced. This is significant because FSM eligibility is an indicator that allocates funding through the Wirral Schools Funding Formula and also the Pupil Premium (primary £1,320 and secondary £935).

The benefits team have been working on an Opt Out Project to maximise the number of children claiming free school meals. Additional staffing is needed to do this. The team proactively search the Benefits system for families who are eligible, they then write informing them that they will be registered for FSM unless they request otherwise. The Benefits team have also shared data with Early Years so that parents with children moving from nursery to reception do not need to re-apply for FSM in the child's new school.

It was noted that data sharing of 16-19 year olds on free school meals moving to colleges will be beneficial as the colleges also need this information.

An update will be provided at a future forum meeting.

Resolved

- The work on the Opt Out project to increase FSM takeup and increase pupil premium is noted.
- An agreed contribution of £10,000 from the Forum Budget will be paid to offset some of the extra costs incurred.

5. Post 16 and 19-25 High Needs Provision

Ste Bailey informed the Forum of the work at Wirral Metropolitan College to support students with High Needs. The college Additional Learning Support Team supports students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

High cost low incidence SEN students are often in small classes, many learning in 'Prep for Life' courses.

It was noted that the development of work in this area has contributed to the reduction of out of borough specialist provision from a total of 35 in 2010-11 to 2 in 2015-16.

The slides are attached to the minutes.

6. Traded Services Update

Ian McGrady updated the Forum on the school traded services company, Edsential. The Business Plan has been agreed by both Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester Councils and the new company will be launched on 1st December 2015. A great deal of work has been undertaken to bring school catering together as one service from the beginning of the autumn term. This has seen the introduction of new menus and new daily food supplies. In January the SLA offer for 2016-17 will be discussed with schools.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

7. Budget Monitoring Update

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the schools budget for 2015-16. There is an indicative shortfall of £250k over a number of central school budgets, particularly within Special Educational Needs. The area will be closely reviewed and proposals will be brought to the next meeting to manage the shortfall.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

8. Early Years Update and Extension to 30 Hours

Rajinder Ghataora informed the forum that the uptake for 2 year old nursery places was 74% of those eligible, which is above the national average and was recognised by the Sam Gyimah, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education. Early Years Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2015 with an amount of £74k being paid to Wirral early years providers in the summer term.

A new on-line application process has been introduced to make it easier for parents to check if their child is eligible for the pupil premium. This will speed up the applications process.

The introduction of 30 hours free childcare entitlement for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds will be available from September 2017. Nationally there will be a number of early implementer sites from September 2016.

An early years group will be set up to discuss the policy and its implications. Simon Davies (PVI Rep), Nickie Prance (PVI Rep) and Lynn Ireland (Primary Governor Rep) have all volunteered to be part of this group.

Resolved

- Forum notes the report
- A task group will be set up to maintain an overview of the policy and the implications.

9. School Intervention

Sue Talbot outlined the expenditure of the School Intervention Grant and its impact on school outcomes.

Primary School Intervention - £355,500

- £209k has been used to support vulnerable schools, which has improved attainment at KS1 and KS2 for all the schools involved.
- £45k has been used to raise standards in early years, with attainment continuing to be 3% above the national average.
- £36k to support the primary Headteacher consultant post.

Secondary School Intervention - £319,000

- £98k to commission support from Teaching Schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

- A further £106k to support vulnerable schools to raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- £44k to improve teaching and learning at the Pupil Referral Unit, including a pilot for online learning.
- £40k to support the secondary Headteacher consultant post.

The impact of this funding has supported school outcomes in a number of areas with 87% of primary, 68% of secondary and 100% of special schools have been judged as good or better by Ofsted, which is well above the national average.

The intervention team were thanked for their work by the forum members.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

10. LACES

Andrew Roberts summarised the Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES) and the support given to children in care. There have been a number of changes over the last few years and from September 2015 the LACES team will be made up of a Virtual Headteacher and 5 (3.8fte) Educational Progress Officers.

As well as meeting the statutory requirements this team will track, monitor and challenge attainment and attendance of each child looked after through a Personal Educational Plan.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

11. PFI and PPM Budget

This report provides the forum with information about the PFI contract and planned programmed maintenance costs.

There is an ongoing piece of work comparing the cost of cleaning and caretaking in PFI and non-PFI schools. The findings will be reported to a future forum meeting.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

12. School Funding 2016-17

Andrew Roberts briefed the Forum of the guidance received from the EFA for the 2016-17 Schools' Budget. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will remain as flat cash. Early years funding, Pupil Premium and UIFSM will be confirmed after the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Comprehensive Spending Review in November.

Resolved

Forum agreed that the budget is prepared in accordance with the report.

13. High Needs Funding Formula Changes 2016-17

Andrew Roberts highlighted the arrangements for High Needs Funding for the 2016-17 financial year. The EFA have indicated that the funding for 2016-17 will remain the same level as this year (£34.3m). The move to place funding based on October census (lagged) data has been delayed and will not take place in the 2016-17 financial year. LA's will be able to adjust place funding locally to reflect anticipated take up. Appendix 1 identified the proposed movement in special school places, which will be consulted on with schools and reported to the next forum meeting.

Longer term changes to SEN funding - The DfE have published a summary of LA responses to an initial consultation on alternative means of distributing SEN resources. These responses were varied but gave no clear direction. A summary report from the ISOS Partnership on future SEN funding was also included with the papers. Both were referred to the Forum's SEN working group.

Resolved

1. Forum agreed that SEN funding will be considered by the SEN working group.
2. Forum agreed that this will then inform a consultation paper on High Needs Funding.
3. Forum endorsed the changes to the High Needs places for 2016-17 which will be consulted on at Head Teacher Groups. Feedback will be presented at the next forum meeting.

14. School Redundancy Costs

Andrew Roberts described the proposed changes to the redundancy policy. Schools will be consulted later this term and views brought back to Forum in January prior to a report to Cabinet.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report and the opportunity to make further comments during the consultation.

15. Scheme for Financing Schools

Sue Ashley informed the Forum of the scheme changes and will consult with Schools shortly. The outcome will be reported to Forum in the Spring.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

16. Membership Update

Sue Ashley updated the Forum on the membership of the Forum. There are currently 28 members and 2 vacancies, a Special School Governor Representative and a C of E Diocese Representative.

The election of the Chair and Vice Chair will take place annually. The Chair will sit for one year, following which the Vice Chair will become Chair and a new Vice Chair will be elected.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

17. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

The dates of the meetings for this academic year are:-

Wednesday 13th January 2016

Wednesday 27th April 2016

Wednesday 6th July 2016

18. Any Other Business

There was no other business