



City of Westminster

Westminster Schools' Forum Meeting - Minutes

Date and time of meeting: Monday 13th November 2023 at 4.45pm at Westminster City Hall

Representing	Name	Organisation	Attendance
Primary Schools	6 Members		
Primary Head	Lee Duffy (LD)	St Marys Bryanston Square CE Primary	Present
Primary Head	Darren Guttridge (DG)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
Primary Head	Alix Ascough (AA)	All Souls CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	Andrew Garwood-Watkins (AGW) (Chair)	St James and St John CE Primary	Present
Primary Governor	VACANT		
Primary Governor	Simon Mair (SM)	Edward Wilson Primary	Present
Secondary schools	1 Member		
Secondary Head	Eugene Moriarty (EM)	St Augustine's CE High School	Present
Academies	6 Members		
Secondary Academy Principal	Richard Ardron (RA)	Marylebone Boys School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Peter Broughton (PB)	Westminster City School	Present
Secondary Academy Principal	Susanne Staab (SS)	The Greycoat Hospital School	Present
Secondary Academy Proprietor	Paul Wood (PW)	Westminster Academy	Present
Primary Academy Head	Claire Cleary (CC)	Gateway Academy	Present
Alternative Provision Academy Principal	Wasim Butt (WB)	Ormiston Beachcroft	Apologies
	Represented by: Michelle Burgess-Allen	Ormston Beachcroft	Present
Maintained Nursery Schools	1 member		
Nursery Head	Liz Hilliard (LH)	Tachbrook Nursery School	Present
Special Schools	1 member		
Executive Headteacher	Noel Gibb (NG)	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Absent
Headteacher QEII Special School	Represented by Claire Shepherd	Westminster Special Schools Federation	Present
Early Years (PVI)	1 member		
PVI	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	LEYF	Present
14-19 Representative	1 member		
Secondary Head	Kathryn Pugh (KP)	The St Marylebone CofE School	Present
Advisers			
Executive Headteacher	Aaron Sumner (AS)	North Westminster Federation	Present
Officers in Attendance			
Executive Director of Children's Services	Sarah Newman (SN)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Director of Education	Ian Heggs (IH)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Apologies
Deputy Director of Education	Shelley Duffy (SD)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Assistant Director – SEN & Educational Psychology	Julie Ely (JE)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present
Head of Admissions and Access to Education	Wendy Anthony (WA)	Bi-Borough Children's Services	Present

Lead Strategic Finance Manager	Anita Stokes (ASt)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Senior Finance Manager	Poonam Gagda (PG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Finance Manager School Deficits	Estera Wojcik (EW)	Bi-Borough Finance - Children’s	Present
Finance Manager Capital and School Budgets	Rahul Ganatra (RG)	Bi-Borough Finance – Children’s	Present
Head of Early Years and Childcare/Interim Principal Lead Adviser	Iraklis Kolokotronis (IK)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
Senior Adviser School Inclusion	Hilary Shaw (HS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services	Present
Senior School Governance Adviser/Clerk	Jackie Saddington (JS)	Bi-Borough Children’s Services Education	Present
Observers			
Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning	Cllr Tim Roca (TR)	Councillor	Apologies
Primary Academy Head	Lisa Breslin (LB)	Gateway Academy	Present
Director of Finance and Administration	John Mcdonald (JMc)	The St Marylebone CE School	Present

Item		Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were sent by Ian Heggs and Cllr Roca.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	MEMBERSHIP JS reported that Clare Cleary (Gateway Academy) was the new representative for the Primary Academy Head position. The Primary Governor vacancy had been advertised and no nominees had responded or been recommended. JS asked for members to consider potential governors for the position. Wasim Butt’s term of office finishes on 1 December 2023. Michelle Burgess-Allen stated it had been agreed with Wasim Butt that she would take on the Alternative Provision Academy position from 2 December 2023. Susanne Staab ‘s term of office finishes on 19 January 2024.	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
4.	MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 19 JUNE 2023 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 were approved.	

	RESOLUTION: The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 were approved.	
5.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><u>St Vincent de Paul</u></p> <p>The Westminster Cathedral site was no longer being used by the school; therefore, the lump sum allocation was not applicable.</p>	
	RESOLUTION: Noted.	
6.	<p>HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MANAGEMENT UPDATE</p> <p>JE presented the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She highlighted points 3.2, relating to the number of EHCPs and 3.4, relating to the increased top up funding for All Souls CE Primary autism provision. The commissioning forecast, shown at 3.15-3.17, along with the table at 3.16, and 4.3-4.6 were emphasised by JE, in relation to forecast growth. Members were also updated on the allocations for the Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) for 2023/2024 for Special Schools and Alternative Provision (AP) Schools.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>JE explained workers were being embedded in each of the schools involved in the initiatives, which would benefit 75 pupils. The next steps would be to review the outcomes of the pilot scheme and bring the results to the Schools' Forum.</p> <p>KP explained that St Marylebone Bridge will be engaging in discussions with JE about top up funding applying to all schools. ASt confirmed this and stated the aim of the HNBRG was to work towards top up funding for all schools.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To note the growth in the number of EHCPs and Statutory Assessments. ii) To note the development work to support more children in local schools and plans. iii) To note the ongoing role of the HNBRG in the commissioning plan. iv) To approve the increased top up for All Souls CE Primary School of £24,000, from September 2023. v) To agree to formally establish the Beachcroft outreach pilot, expanding its reach to five Westminster Secondary Schools at a cost of £60,000 funded from the High Needs Block from January 2024. vi) To allocate the TPAG funding as per the DfE allocations shown at section five of the report. 	<p>JE</p> <p>AST</p>
7.	DSG MONITORING 2023-2024 AND ESTMATED SCHOOLS BALANCES	

ASt presented the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She highlighted the dedicated schools grant allocation for 2023-2024 outlined at 1.1 in the report. Section 3, table 2, of the report was reviewed and members were informed the Early Years was projected to break even, and the Total Schools and CSSB outcome was projected to have an overspend of £213k. This was as expected and would be covered by the DSG reserves. The total High Needs Block balance was predicted to have an underspend of £317k and the Total Dedicated Schools Grant 2023-2024 an underspend of £104k. Top up funding was predicted to have an underspend of £160k.

Questions

Funds to top up and placements in the independent sector are costly. Could this be discussed at the HNBRG with a view to moving more placements to state provision? Will there be more special schools in the borough?

Members were informed that:

- work is being undertaken in RBKC around this issue, making use of the DfE grant, which may help WCC in the long term.
- The independent schools used have access to speech and language therapy and sensory skills.
- Satellite provision is being created as the LA wants to have its own placements in borough.
- Case studies are being reviewed, looking at workforce development and therapies.

SN explained it was important to consider local need and how it can be met. Health funding had been secured for primary schools for two years and work was being undertaken pan London to look at cost effectiveness.

CS informed members that the Federation of Westminster Special Schools was trying to create places for year 7 outreach.

The Chair reminded members it had previously been agreed to review provision between 2019 -2023, with a view to planning for three years. It was agreed this would be reviewed by the HNBRG.

PG was asked if historical commitments had finished. She advised these would conclude this year as it was the final year.

Balances

The forecast for the number of schools to be rag-rated red for 2023-2024, remains at 14, whilst the number of schools at amber is predicted to increase by 3, from 7 to 10. Deficits are timebound by the DfE and must be resolved within three years.

	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the revised 2023-2024 DSG allocation of £95.358m and forecast underspend of £0. 104m.</p> <p>ii) To note the projected year end school balances.</p> <p>iii) To refer discussions on top up funding and independent placements to the HNBRG.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>ISOS WORKING GROUP UPDATE</p> <p>ASu, as chair of the working group, introduced the report that had previously been circulated, and WA presented the report.</p> <p>WA reported that the annual projections on school places would be presented at future school, LA and Union meetings. There was likely to be no surprises, with the primary schools continuing a downward trajectory. By taking out capacity this would help to mitigate the issues facing primary schools. There has been 12FE removed since the Isos working group first reported but there is still likely to be a surplus of places this year of approximately 24%. Without the action that had already been taken this would have been 30%.</p> <p>Two schools have amalgamated in the last year but there are none planned that the LA is aware of at present. The only options left to schools now are closure or amalgamations and these both involve legal processes, as there is still further work to be undertaken to reduce the surplus. Capping is not a permanent answer and schools will need to decide on their next steps. Further information on place planning will be brought to the January meeting and other school meetings. It was agreed that a further Isos meeting was required, ASu would chair the meeting and WA and ASt would agree a suitable date.</p> <p>JE, WA and ASt left the meeting at 5.26pm.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To agree that the continued focus of the Isos Working Group is to consider all possible options to mitigate forecast surplus capacity in Westminster primary provision.</p> <p>ii) To agree that the Isos Working Group should continue to receive information on the deficit position of schools with significant surplus places to inform options to reduce capacity.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>EARLY YEARS SUPPLEMENTARY GRANT</p> <p>PG presented the report that had previously been circulated. Members were informed that this one-off funding will be payable from September 2023 to March 2024 and, as directed by the DfE. The Local Authority will pass on the EYSG in full to early years providers for each of the existing early years funding streams outlined at 1.1. The rates for the new financial year have not yet been announced by the DfE but these should</p>	

	<p>be known by 30 November. The 2023-2024 Early Years funding rates, outlined at 2.5 were highlighted.</p> <p>JTS asked if any settings were preparing to open new provisions. IK reported that two new provisions had opened and discussions were taking place with chid minders for funded places for two year olds and younger.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: To note the rates for the Early Years Supplementary Grant for September 2023 to March 2024, as detailed in section 2 of the report.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>PROVISIONAL 2024-2025 DSG SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA REVIEW</p> <p>ASt presented the report that had previously been circulated, highlighting that the DfE had issued incorrect figures initially and in the updated figures WCC received £940k less funding. Members were referred to paragraph 1.5 and reminded of the previous decisions made by the Schools’ Forum in March 2023 and June 2023.</p> <p>ASt reported that Local Authorities will continue to set local funding formula in 2024-2025 and are required to move at least 10% closer to the NFF factor values. In addition, Local Authorities will continue to set a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in local formulae, which in 2024-2025 must be between +0% and +0.5% per pupil compared to per pupil funding in 2023-2024.</p> <p>Table 1, at paragraph 2.4 showed the provisional DSG Schools Block in 2024-2025. Table 3a at 5.9 showed the Revised Funding Formula Options. Members were advised that there was not a lot of difference between the two options shown, with some differences for individual schools. The agreed process at Table 4 was highlighted to members.</p> <p>A robust discussion took place and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two secondary schools lose a lot more than other schools. ASt stated the NNDR rates had been reduced and agreed the figures needed reviewing. She said the figures that would be brought to the Schools’ Forum in January would include any revisions. • St Vincent De Paul (SVDP) had been given an additional lump sum for operating from two site. This was no longer applicable as the Westminster Cathedral site would not be used by SVDP. • Secondary schools were asking for the minimum 10% move to the NFF to be considered as an option. • Deprivation is a barrier to education and equality and deprivation is an argument to look at the 10% option too. 	

- ASt reminded members she had attended WSSIC in October 2022 and members had asked for a 10% option to be considered then as it was felt this would benefit more schools evenly over time.
- Members were reminded of the options previously presented to the Schools' Forum and that the Schools' Forum had made a commitment the previous November to move faster and closer to the NFF.
- It was important to preserve per pupil funding as the NFF will be based on previous years per pupil funding. WSSIC asked for options to be considered that preserve the maximum pupil premium funding.

The Chair reminded members that a plan had been agreed to move to the NFF which recognised the move to deprivation. He highlighted the different options pointing out that 10% had not previously been agreed for consultation by the Schools' Forum. A decision could be taken at the meeting that day on the options presented, or the Schools' Forum could consult on including the 10% option. A further consultation would mean a decision would need to be taken at the January 2024 meeting, giving ASt and the LA three days to carry out the necessary work required before the DfE deadline of 21 January 2024.

Additional points considered were:

- The credibility and confidence of the Schools' Forum would be undermined if another option was included for consultation, as a decision had already been taken to enable schools to plan in a timely manner.
- There was no intention of undermining the Schools' Forum, the view was that members of the Schools' Forum were being consulted and some members thought it would be helpful to ask for another option to be considered, as primary schools had not seen details for a 10% option.
- Three options had been considered at the March meeting and two options had been agreed.
- The two options had been discussed and agreed by Governing Boards.
- There is a huge risk of the LA not being able to submit the information to the DfE by the deadline if another option is consulted on.

The Chair reminded all members that their role on the Schools' Forum was to act in the best interests of all children, not their own sector or school.

Secondary representatives requested the meeting was adjourned so that they could consider their representatives views. It was agreed that the meeting would be adjourned whilst the secondary school members met separately. The meeting was adjourned at 6.05pm and reconvened at 6.10pm.

	<p>KP, as chair of WSSIC, reported that the secondary members recognised it would not be conducive to moving the position on, if the 10% option was added for consultation. Whilst secondary members felt the 10% option gave benefits, members did not want to be adversarial and therefore withdrew the request to consult on the 10% option. Members voted and agreed to proceed with option 1.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: i) To note the updated figures from the ESFA. ii) To agree Option 1 as recommended by Officers for the Local Funding Formula. iii) To note the next steps for finalising schools funding for 2024-2025, as outlined in section 8 of the report. iv) To note that proposals will be brought to the January meeting of the Schools' Forum regarding fair access funding for secondary schools and de-delegation for maintained schools including restructuring costs.</p>	
11.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
	<p>RESOLUTION: Noted.</p>	
12.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Wednesday 17 January 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall Monday 18 March 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall Monday 17 June 2024 – 4.45pm – Westminster City Hall</p> <p>The meeting closed at 6.17pm.</p>	

ACTIONS

Item 6	To agree to formally establish the Beachcroft outreach pilot	JE/AST
Item 7	To refer discussions on top up funding and independent placements to the HNBRG.	JE/AST
Item 10	Fair Access Funding for Secondary Schools proposals and de-delegation for maintained schools, including restructuring costs to be brought to the January meeting.	