

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum
Date and time: 13th June 2024, 2pm to 4pm
Location: Virtual Microsoft Teams

Membership

'A' denotes absence

A	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Helen Roberts	Maintained Primary Head Teacher – (Vice Chair)
A	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
	Anne Hall	Academy Representative
	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
A	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
A	Daniel Moore	Academy Representative
	Ella Tuxford	Academy Representative
	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
A	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Amanda Harrison	Governor Academy School Representative
	Katie Thackery	Governor Academy School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
A	Louise Knott	14-19 Partnership Representative
	Joe Jefferies	Trade Union Representative - NASUWT
A	Jo Myers	Trade Union Representative - UNISON

In attendance:

Karen Hughman	Group Manager, Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager, Early Childhood Services
Sarju Sheta	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Jason Gooch	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed all members and informed Forum that we had two new members.</p> <p>Amanda Harrison and Katie Thackery introduced themselves. Amanda Harrison parent governor for two years and vice chair at Gamston St Peter's CofE Academy (Academy Governor Representative) Katie Thackery school business manager at St John's CofE Academy in Worksop, worked in schools for the past 15 years initial under maintained provision (Academy Representative)</p>	
	<p>Apologies</p> <p>We have a member substitute Kirsty Lowde business manager at Chilwell school for David Phillips.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Andrew Rossington, Daniel Moore, Neil Robinson, Colin Barnard, Louise Knotts, Nigel Frith, Cllr Sam Smith, Cllr Nigel Moxon, Colin Pettigrew, Peter McConnochie, Lynda Poole, Irene Kakoullis and Gareth Moss.</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes – 28th February 2024</p> <p>Page 2 there was an alteration to the wordings which was sent out and amended.</p> <p>Page 4 action point to be picked up later in the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes approved as accurate.</p>	ACTION
3.	<p>3a 23-24 DSG Final Accounts Report</p> <p>Sarju Sheta presented the paper.</p> <p>Report shows money received, how the grant was spent, and what the various underspends/overspends were within the school funding blocks, detailed, and explained.</p> <p>Matt Rooney – regards the underspends an assurance from officers on how they will better target the funds to meet the needs of pupils, especially when mainstream schools are holding on to pupils who require a special school place.</p> <p>What's the plan with underspends? Where does it go and has it been earmarked, for example, into the current financial year for right sizing the special school budgets?</p> <p>Sarju Sheta - funding will be carried forward to 2024-25, increases within certain budgets are show in the next paper. It will show extra spend provided in certain areas where there are pressures. However, if there are specific areas members think it will be useful for the Local Authority (LA) to concentrate the funding on, this can be looked at.</p> <p>Jason Gooch presented the early years section of the paper.</p> <p>LA receives funding based on the average of two January counts a year. Funded on a financial year, data used is over 2 academic years. LA pays out to the sector based on actual take up.</p> <p>Appendix B was talked through and explained. Large majority of the underspend is due to three- and four-year-old entitlements, universal and extended hours.</p> <p>Forecasting was based on previous year's trends, the difference historically or over the last five years has seen around a 2% reduction in the numbers used for funding when</p>	

actual numbers are around 1% less than previous years. When paying out to the sector the trend has been around a 1% reduction and there's been a 1% reduction.

Extended hours three- and four-year-olds numbers have grown, regards funding there's been around a 3% increase but when paying out on actuals it's only grown by 2%, the previous year the numbers decreased by 2.73%.

Two-year-olds, previous years trend has seen around a 4% reduction to both funded numbers and payments out to the sector, where as they decreased by 9% and 10% retrospectively. Uncertainty whether we will continue to see such a large decline for future years, or whether it will get back to normal rates of decline.

Laura Gapski - Can anyone shed any light on what's happening with two-year-olds? and why? The formula that's currently used to fund LA's (the two January census) will this be the way under three will be calculated?

Jason Gooch - no change to the current entitlements for deprived 2-year-olds for the next financial year, but the new entitlements, which is the working parents of two-year-olds from the 1st of April and then from September, extended to 9-month-olds, funding will be based on 3 counts Summer, Autumn, and Spring census. Officers have no idea why there is a change in how LA's are funded, can only assume to try, and align funding and actuals.

A request from Laura Gapski to monitor the different funding mechanism to try and avoid an underspend.

Karen Richards - regarding lack of applications for DAF, and the deprivation fund most settings simply have not got the admin team to apply. Something that needs looking at as a sector, the sector is not officially allowed to utilise or retain any of the grant funding receive for administrative purposes. This was 2nd by Laura Gapski. Concern for the potential plans from government to introduce nurseries on school sites and what this would mean to staffing levels in PVI's.

Mandy Stratford – 2nd what Jason Gooch had said regards how the LA would be funded and that the use of three census points throughout the year, was used during COVID times when funding was based on actual bums on seats this worked well with less of a fluctuation in the LA's spend.

Sarju Sheta – summary shows beginning of the year a surplus of £18.285M, based on the net effect in year and spend on the reserve there's a current surplus of £19.084M

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Note the contents of this report - noted.
2. Note the carry forward of underspend detailed in paragraph 4 into 2023/24 - noted.
3. To approve the distribution of the net underspend for 3- & 4-year-olds for 2023/24 to the Early Years sector.

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
13	0	0

3b DSG Budget Monitoring Period 2

Sarju Sheta and Jason Gooch presented the paper.

With it only being period 2 it's early in the year, and difficult to provide a meaningful forecast based on actuals and therefore have presented a balanced budget with highlights of areas with pressure.

An attempt to increase the bandings rates of 10 special schools over the next three years matching banding rates at Fountainsdale. An effort to enable the right level of staffing to be recruited to provide a quality service between various partnerships and inclusion teams.

There has been an increase in the independent specialist service, where we have seen high cost pressures over the last two years, and an increase in pupil numbers of children identified with SEND, with a high number of exclusions over the last year all adding to the cost pressures.

In terms of high needs, the budget compared to last year as increased by £6M, comparing against last years budget will demonstrate the areas where this has been spent.

Jamie Hutchinson – The increase in exclusions, what does that mean in terms of cost? And has anyone costed this?

Karen Hughman – This would sit under Tracy Ayres, the LA devolved the money used to fund the pupil referral units out to schools, and the LA put in place a cost recovery mechanism, if schools feel that they must permanently exclude, the mechanism works differently for secondary and primary schools. Often what higher rates of permanent exclusion means is that there is less money going into schools through the devolved partnership funding because there's a direct link between meeting the cost of excluded pupils and how much money is then left to devolve out to partnerships of schools.

All permanently excluded children in Nottinghamshire are either placed, where possible back into another school, depending on the reason for the permanent exclusion, something the partnership team would try to negotiate, but as the LA no longer has pupil referral units most of these children will end up being placed in alternative provision (AP) at least for a period.

Jamie Hutchinson - when hearing an area has increased such as exclusions it would help to see actual data, showing by how many and what that means cost wise.

Kirsty Lowde – it would be useful to see a breakdown whether it's a reduction in the funding or the cost mechanism amount. A document is received specifying the rules and what the charge is, and it's this charge that needs a breakdown. Specifically mid-year children that are excluded.

Jason Gooch – reiterated what was said for agenda item 3a, the forecasting difficulties and that various scenarios can be worked through. A more detailed report to be bought to the next forum when more data is available.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Note the contents of this report - noted.

3c Pupil Growth Fund 2024-25

Karen Hughman presented the paper.

Key area of growth for this year has been in secondary due to a large bulge of children going through to secondary. There are not enough places and as last year the LA have work with the secondary sector to create an additional 471 places.

Bulge year to continue for about the next three years, so this is likely to be an ongoing piece of work. The growth also impacts the capital programmes; the place planning team are working carefully to decide where there is a need for permanent increase to capacity of secondary school places and where only temporary additional places are required as in three or four years pupil numbers will start to drop and these places will not be needed.

James Macdonald - Rushcliffe and West Bridgford school are taking 60 additional pupils is their Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) correct? Their allocation in funding is £360,000, assurance required that their PAN is not set deliberately low to maximise this extra funding. The Forum welcomes the fact that our young people are not making a long journey to school such as Ruddington to Eastwood however, it's important that if changes are being made the PAN must be adjusted so it's equitable across all schools.

Karen Hughman - schools where there needs to be a permanent change, Rushcliffe is one, where there is significant building work going on once complete PAN will be changed.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Notes the content of the report – noted.
2. Continues to monitor the use of this fund throughout 2024-25 – agreed to continue monitoring.

3d Minster Minimum Per Pupil (MPP)

Sarju Sheta presented the paper, and Toni Gardner talked the members through the formula following the spreadsheet sent.

This follows a request from Nadeem Shah to better understand how the MPP works for The Minister school which the LA submits a yearly disapplication to adjust their MPP allocation on the principle that we believe as a Forum, all young people in Nottinghamshire should be treated the same and the ESFA formula does not accommodate for a small number of primary pupils in a secondary setting.

Whether to submit a disapplication for Minster has always been and will continue to be part of the yearly consultation process.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

	<p>1. Notes the requirement to make the alteration to the MPP for The Minster School to address this anomaly - noted</p>																
	<p>3e Composition of working</p> <p>Members for High Level Needs and Early Years group discussed and confirmed.</p> <p>Plan to have a meeting in the next six weeks before the summer break, face to face would be preferred spread geographically, the plan for these groups is not a one off but to run for at least the next academic year.</p> <p>It will be either a morning meeting to start at 9 or afternoon meeting to start at 2.30.</p> <p>Terms of reference and desired outputs to be established for both working groups at the first meeting.</p>																
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Dates for the new academic year were presented and members informed that two of the dates September and March would be held on a Wednesday and not the usual Thursday.</p>																
<p>5.</p>	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>																
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="146 1173 1334 1402"> <tr> <td>Wednesday 18 September 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>St Giles DN22 7NJ (in person only)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 7 November 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 5 December 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 5 March 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 12 June 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>In person – Location TBC</td> </tr> </table>	Wednesday 18 September 2024	2-4pm	St Giles DN22 7NJ (in person only)	Thursday 7 November 2024	2-4pm	TBC	Thursday 5 December 2024	2-4pm	TBC	Wednesday 5 March 2025	2-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Thursday 12 June 2025	2-4pm	In person – Location TBC	
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