

## **Summary of Brent Schools Forum**

**Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Schools Forum held on  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College**

### **Attended by:**

#### **Members of the Forum**

##### **Governors**

Mike Heiser (MH) Chair  
Martin Beard (MB)  
Stephen Greene (SG)  
Frazer Wilson (FW)

##### **Head Teachers**

Sue Knowler (SK)  
Sylvie Libson – Chair (SL)  
Lesley Benson (LB)  
Jo Gilbert (JG)

##### **Lead Member**

Cllr Bob Wharton (BW)

##### **Officers**

Mustafa Salih (MS)  
Bharat Jashapara (BJ)  
Lin Diaby (LD)  
John Voytel (JV)  
Lesley Fox-Lee (LFL)  
Roy Smith (RS)  
Rik Boxer (RB)

##### **Others**

Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)  
Nicole Kennedy (NK)  
Ruby Azam (RA)  
Jemma Mortlock (JM) (PVI Observer invited to speak)

MH opened the meeting at 6.05pm and asked for all members to introduce themselves for the benefit of the PVI observers.

### **1. Apologies**

Gill Bal, Pauline Pompilis, Terry Molloy, Wendy Yianni.

### **2. Minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

i) Accuracy

The minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

ii) Matters arising

- No matters arising.

### **3. Response to Early Years Consultation**

There was a paper on the announcement of a delay to the implementation of Early Years Single Funding Formula. Schools Forum debated the Single Funding Formula, noted the press reports to delay implementation to April 2011, and noted the Executive will have to take a decision on early implementation in a more favourable climate balanced with that of later implementation allowing more time to include consultation with parents. Forum members voted in favour of the proposal to delay implementation of the Single Funding Formula until April 2011 and in favour of option 2 on full time places.

### **4. Schools Budget Outturn 2008/09**

A paper was noted on the Schools Budget Outturn for 2008/09 highlighting the fact that revenue balances increased by £2.1m.

NK commented that early years are being pushed to pick up SEN early. This explains why the costs are increasing.

### **5. School Balances**

LD presented the school balances report to be noted by Schools Forum.

MH requested a more detailed report for the next schools forum detailing the balances committed and by what date they were to be spent.

SL commented that schools can't keep putting the same things every year.

SK suggested it would be helpful for support from the centre on how to spend the surplus balances wisely – for example from architects. Schools must be encouraged to spend the balances for the children in school now.

MB stated it was very much a Governors responsibility and Governors need to be aware of balances and the percentage limits. Also requested that the returns are sent to Governors too.

FW asked if this was linked to FMSiS in the Statement of Internal Control or something similar to that.

MH requested a report on FMSiS to be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting.

### **6. Schools Budget Report 2010/11**

BJ presented the Schools Budget Report for 2010/11 paper.

MH confirmed Forum is requested to note the budget and note the budget pressures.

LB requested that the budget for Teachers attached to Children Centres be looked at urgently as this was not being distributed equitably across the Children Centres.

SL asked what the Early Years EPS budget was for.

BJ said he would come back with details of that.

LB also asked about what the retained functions budget was for.

SL asked what the Support for non maintained settings was for.

BJ confirmed he would get definitions and descriptions of those items.

MS requested the Early Years Teachers attached to Children Centres review go to the Early Years sub group. **Agreed by Forum**

NK commented there was a lot of Capital Funding money going into the PVI sector. No assistance has been available as was previously suggested for school balances being spent.

SL asked if the speech therapy budget is from the PCT

MH requested a further ECM Lead Professionals report to the next Schools Forum

MH confirmed Schools Forum noted report and pressures.

## **7. Funding Formula of SEN Statements in Mainstream Schools**

RS presented the paper on SEN Statements in Mainstream Schools.

MB asked if this proposal would be a one off cost.

RS replied this would be one off in terms of the central contingency being brought forward, then it would be put into the ISB.

MB clarified in one year there would be 18 months of statements and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year 12 months.

BJ confirmed that is correct.

LB asked how this would affect Early Years.

RS replied that the paper does not have the answer but the views of schools is required.

MH proposed that the formula working group should reconvene to review this.

SK commented that once a child has a statement, it is unlikely to lose it. SK asked if statements could be time limited.

RB explained that a lot of work has been done underneath this paper. If a child has a statement, the need to amend or discontinue the statement should be considered at annual review. Very few move off of statements following review. The proposals could look at individual pupil support agreements with termly reviews in schools and 2 yearly overall reviews.

SL asked are the bandings now accepted across the board including mainstream schools.

RS confirmed the Local Authority is looking to deploy the bandings across mainstream pupils. There is a need to look at the current differentials to fully understand them and look at how the bandings could be used in these settings.

LG commented it is a different ball game in the mainstream and she hopes the decision is not just financially based as this should be about inclusion.

LG also asked to be included on the working group.

RS suggested the working group would be led by SEN specialists with financial support.

MH asked does the Forum think someone from trade unions should be included.

MB commented that the membership may change with the new Schools Forum elections that have taken place.

MH confirmed that Schools Forum recommend trade union to be included.

## **8. Schools Forum Membership Report**

BJ present the Schools Forum Membership Report. Highlighting Dean Newby the Nursery Schools Governor should be added to the list on Page 2 and that further advertising is required for Governors as there are still vacancies.

LG commented that Item 3.1 in the report states that non school members are nominated by the Local Authority but in fact they are not formally nominated.

MS commented that Secondary head teachers feel there is a misbalance in Secondary to Primary representation.

SK commented there are less Secondary Schools now due to some converting to Academies but the number of Schools Forum representatives have remained the same.

LB suggested that from the pupil numbers the balance appears to be correct and asked what the issues are.

MS replied that they don't see why the primary sector should have more representatives to decide on school budgets.

LB commented that none of the Secondary Heads representatives were present to discuss the matter. Also Schools Forum members do not vote on a sector premise but for all matters equally.

MB confirmed the Schools Forum is co-operative at present but suggested that may not work like that in the future.

MB commented that most Secondary Governors are also involved in the Primary sector but not many vice versa. This leaves the understanding of other sectors not reciprocated from Primary Governors.

MH asked the Forum to:

- a) note the arrangements for filling the vacancies
- b) note representation for new Schools Forum
- c) Frazer Wilson and Stephen Greene to be co-opted for the next meeting.
- d) BJ to write again to Governors to encourage members
- e) Note rationale for Secondary/Primary numbers.

## **9. Brent Council Improvement & Efficiency Programme**

MS presented the paper to launch the Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan and schools discussion paper from Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families.

LG requested a link to the plan be put on the Schools Forum Page.

LD will check that it is not already available on the Brent Internet site.

MS proposed further discussions should be held in Schools Forum and the Schools Funding Review Group should be utilised for more detailed discussions.

LG asked what the Silver projects will be.

MS replied that is what the Schools Funding Review Group will discuss.

FW asked if the savings are to come through budget share items, commenting that the biggest savings would be in Capita IT services, which is off budget share.

SK commented that a number of members sat on the Best Value Gershon review, which didn't get very far.

SK suggested there is a need for support from procurement specialists to help identify and negotiate savings.

FW commented that the Energy person that was agreed in a previous Schools Forum meeting should also be useful in this process.

MH called for Schools Forum to agree the recommendation.

MH thanked all previous Schools Forum members for their contribution.

## **10. Any Other Business**

MH requested the Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February meeting be changed to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Next meeting  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Manor School  
Chamberlayne Road, Kensal Rise,  
London NW10 3NT

Meeting closed 9pm