

**Brent Schools Forum****Minutes of the Schools Forum held on  
Wednesday 24 June 2015 at Queens Park Community School****Attended by Members of the Forum:****Governors:**

Martin Beard (MB)  
Helga Gladbaum(HG)  
Mike Heiser (MH)  
Cllr Lesley Jones (LJ)  
Herman Martyn (HM)  
Richard Martyn (RM)

**Head Teachers:**

Rose Ashton (RA)  
Gill Bal (GB)  
Lesley Benson (LB)  
Kay Charles (KC)  
Matthew Lantos (ML)  
Terry Molloy (TM)  
Sabina Netty(SN)

**PRU:**

Terry Hoad (TH)

**PVI Sector:**

Paul Russell (PR)

**Trade Unions:**

Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)

**14-19 Partnership:****Observers:**

David Curry(DC)  
Vivian Dean (VD)  
Paul Jones (PJ)

**Lead Member (C&YP):**

Cllr Ruth Moher (RM)

**Officers:**

Gail Tolley (GT)  
Minesh Patel (MP)  
Norwena Thomas (NT)  
Ravinder Jassar (RJ)  
Devbai Patel (DP)  
Carmen Coffey (CC)  
Janet Lewis (JL)  
Sanmi Akinlabi (SA)

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	The Forum commenced at 6.10pm.	
1.0	<u>Apologies</u>  Cate Duffy Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman Sue Knowler Sylvie Libson Andy Prindiville Umesh Raichada	
1.2	<u>Absences</u>  Titilola McDowell Cllr Ketan Sheth	
2.0	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015 and Matters Arising</b>	
2.1	<u>Accuracy</u>	
2.1.1	There were no corrections to be made to the minutes which were therefore approved as an accurate record.	
2.2	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
2.2.1	<u>Update on VAT as to why the VA schools are not exempted from paying VAT on the governors' liability of capital funding and Academies are exempted</u> – MP reported that LA has formally written to DfE but have not had a response yet. This was to be followed up.	Cate Duffy/ MP
2.2.2	<u>School Meals budget – officers to find out from other authorities if their schools have funding issue for meals that have to pureed and for kosher meals</u> – LA has formally written to DfE but have not had a response. HM asked if the DfE has had a reminder, MP agreed to send a reminder.  <u>Follow up with Legal on when the settlement agreement policy will be available to schools</u> – This was checked by Legal and put on Schools Extranet in March 2015.	Cate Duffy/ MP
2.2.4	<u>Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application</u> – This will be brought to the September Forum.	CC



- 2.2.5 Update on Schools Forum membership – An Agenda item for this Forum.
- 2.2.6 Check if sixth form pupil number were included in the last membership calculations – NT confirmed that sixth form and nursery numbers were included in the previous calculations but stated that they should not have been included. Nursery and sixth form pupils should be excluded from the schools calculations as they have their own representation at Schools Forum.
- 2.2.7 Respond to council on the proposed cuts to services – A copy of the response was provided to all Schools Forum members.
- 2.2.8 Update on cost implications to send SEN pupils out-borough – An Agenda item for this Forum.
- 2.2.9 Review of Alternative Provisions funding - An Agenda item for this Forum.
- 2.2.10 Review of impact of funding a full-time post to manage Early Years Pupil Premium Grant (EYPPG) – This report is to be brought to September's Forum.

Sue  
Gates

- i. LB reported that a post was approved on the basis that the EYPP eligibility check would be carried out and funding would be paid to maintained and PVI providers. A post has been funded but no payments have been made to any providers. The service is now provided under CC's team. GT provided an update on the recruitment process. She said that the appointment was approved in February and the recruitment process started immediately then. Council policy states that the post had to be advertised internally first, before it could be externally advertised. The post was advertised externally and an appointment was made with the post-holder starting on 16<sup>th</sup> June. GT highlighted that there was no delay as the process commenced straight after its approval.
- ii. GT further added that an advert went out in January for PVIs and schools to attend a meeting and a briefing session on 1<sup>st</sup> March and this was well attended. PVI providers submitted data via portal in April. In total 709 applications were received and only 497 children were eligible for the grant. The Early Years team will be visiting settings in the autumn term to provide support with implementation.
- iii. LB said that if an email was sent out to PVI providers, she did not recall receiving an email, but will check. She added that at her setting every child is put through the eligibility



check. CC apologised and acknowledged that there is definitely a delay in processing applications. She said that communication will go out to schools by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June on Schools Extranet. She was confident that all schools will be notified before the end of the term.

- iv. MH summarised the process which is that parents complete the DfE model form, the LA carries out the eligibility check as recommended by DWP and payments are made.
- v. NT said that the payments for all PPG are made in arrears, with the main school-aged pupil premium - FSM being paid quarterly in arrears. PR said that a number of their pupils will be leaving at the end for the term. How would they be able to show spend against those children if they have left? Some of the courses that the staff should be attending have taken place already. He added that the low eligibility seemed to indicate that there could be more movement, change of circumstances, changing houses and jobs. The providers have a difficult job in influencing parents to complete the forms especially if they do not know English. NT explained that schools would be required to put measures in place for the eligible pupils from April, regardless of when payments are received.
- vi. GT apologised and expressed her concerns regarding the EYPPG payments not being made and lack of communication between LA and Early Years providers. She said that she would arrange to build questions with answers and circulate to all Forum members. MH concluded this item by thanking LB for raising this issue and said hopefully it will be sorted by September.

### **3.0 Update on Cost Implications of Sending SEN Pupils Out-Borough**

*This report was for Information.*

- 3.1 CC presented this report. The report concentrated on costs of sending pupils to independent providers. It provides background and details of the expenditure for independent placements. It was reported that the number of SEN pupils are increasing but Brent's current school expansion programme will reduce the number of independent placements over time. Currently the highest cost per placement is £120k and the lowest cost placement is £28k per annum. It was to be noted that residential places are a joint decision between Education and Social Care, and also the number is going down from the previous year. The independent placement costs are significantly higher when compared with the highest band at special schools. Parents have a preference over where they

wish to place their children and often if not placed in their choice they will go to tribunal and may win. There needs to be a focus on reducing tribunals. These increased from 10 in 2014 to 15 in 2015 but have been relatively steady in the last four years.

- 3.2 ARP units could also reduce independent placements but children do drop out of secondary mainstream settings often in year 7 and also in years 8 and 9. Brent Head teachers do their best to accommodate pupils with additional needs but there are more ARP places in primary schools, which mean that pupils who attend an ARP at primary will not necessarily transfer to a secondary ARP in Brent. The highest needs placed in independent special provision is those children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The next focus of SEN place planning will be on creating additional ARPs.
- 3.3 Currently £6m is spent on independent placements. All special schools have, or will be, expanded by September 2015 and maintained schools continue to support as they do already. This should over time reduce independent placements.
- 3.4 MH thanked CC for the informative report. HG also thanked CC for the report which was of a high quality and very helpful. She said that clearly the area is challenging and the council needs to work more with the Health Service.
- 3.5 LG said it was a fantastic work and a real testament to CC and her team. LG also thanked special schools for increasing capacity and mainstream schools for accommodating ARP provisions within their schools. She said that if Brent caters for more in-borough provisions, there will be a need to consider extra banding above Band 6. She offered to contribute to support from a Trade Union point of view, if it was required.
- 3.6 It was highlighted that the EHC plan is a challenge to complete. Even the graduate level 6 TAs, SENCOs and Head Teachers struggle to complete the form. CC felt that it wasn't that complicated but said that the Early Years team does provide support with this if it was found to be a challenging process. She agreed that it was a lengthy document but part of it could be completed easily once it becomes familiar. She asked for feedback and comments and agreed to work with EY to amend it to make it easier.
- 3.7 ML said he was in agreement to increase their ARP provision. He asked if some schools are less willing to support tribunals and CC replied no but schools decline pupils when asked to take children if they cannot meet their needs.

## **4.0 Brent Outreach Autism Services: Increasing Caseload and Future Provision**

*This report was for Action*

4.1 CC Presented this report. The report requests additional funding of £60k for the increase in demand of the service and for the developments of the service. The funding has been at the same level for the past six years. The number of referrals has increased from 228 to 398 in the past five years. The service is well regarded by schools and parents and with the increase in demand they are struggling to provide the service at the same level. The additional resource will allow the service to increase specialist time for Occupational Therapist and a Clinical Psychologist. It was confirmed that Health Service does provide some support but the diagnosis is provided by the service.

4.2 TM said this increase is small. Brent Outreach Autism Team provides a good intervention with staff and a teaching assistant per child. He felt that £60k was a reasonable request. KC agreed with TM but highlighted that, in her view, the Health Service is not engaging. MH asked members to provide their decisions to this item. All agreed to fund the additional £60k. There were no objections.

## **5.0 Further Update on the New Inclusion and Alternative Education Service (IAES)**

*This report was for Consultation, Information and Action*

5.1 JL presented this report. She said that even though the report is titled for consultation and Information, it does request additional funding of £250k. She paid tribute to schools for being inclusive and keeping children in schools and asked the head teachers to thank their staff for the tremendous work they are doing. Since the restructure of the IAES in March 2013, the rate of permanent exclusions has continued at a high rate. Children are more challenging and even children in nursery are being excluded. In the 7 days running up to the Forum meeting 12 permanent exclusions took place These children cannot be accommodated at Brent River College (BRC) and will be placed in provisions out-borough. At the same time there has been limited re-integration of pupils back to mainstream schools.

5.2 The LA has a statutory duty to provide education to all pupils not in mainstream schools. As mentioned already under Item 4 above, schools are facing challenges from the health service. There is rapid increase in population. She wished she didn't have to ask for additional £250k but this is required to support the continued needs. When a child is excluded, the cost to educate them triples in comparison with the child being taught in a mainstream school. There is no primary PRU provision in the



borough and primary-aged pupils who are excluded have to be educated in Islington which makes it harder for them to re-integrate in the borough.

- 5.3 ML supports the request and added that the units are closing but exclusions are increasing. They have to permanently exclude pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 as they have no resources to deal with them in the mainstream setting. TH said the current BRC budget is tight without any reserves. The staff have just about sufficient funds to cover the running cost. It doesn't allow for any extended provision for those at risk of permanent exclusion. VD said there is not a sufficient number of staff to cover the current pupil needs. Since her arrival in Spring 2014 over 70 pupils have passed through BRC.
- 5.4 RA said that her school was one of the schools invited to participate in the primary-aged intervention programme. The concern was with regards to the proposed funding to do enable this as it would not be sufficient, especially given the school would need a dedicated member of staff.
- 5.5 SN asked if the child is excluded from a school, does the LA take funding from the school that is excluding the child. RJ said they have started doing this from this year.
- 5.6 LB said there is a recent increase in exclusion. She attended a BSP conference where they recognise that they are all our children but we seem to be cash-strapped as well as capacity-stretched.
- 5.7 JL said that both pre and post exclusions support provided to schools by the Inclusion Support Team are working well. However there are issues in KS1 and 2. As highlighted in Item 4 above, there is an increase in children presenting with ASD. The revised SEN Strategy will hope to address provision to prevent some primary exclusions.
- 5.8 LG asked if exclusions are analysed for ethnicity and poverty. JL said that certain groups are disproportionately represented and these are black African and African Caribbean boys. Sadly this reflects the picture in London and Nationally. Black boys are 3 times more likely to be excluded from school than other ethnicities. These pupils are also over-represented in terms of PPG and the majority of pupils who are excluded are boys. National data indicates that approximately 80% of men in prison were excluded from schools.
- 5.9 HG said there were corporate priorities related to the reduction of exclusions. She said perhaps RM and GT could take this forward. A detailed report could be brought to Schools Forum.

ML said this isn't appropriate for the Schools Forum. GT endorsed this and said only financial matters are for Schools Forum.

5.10 The Schools Forum was asked to make decisions on the following recommendations and to vote on the decisions:

- a. the increases to the budgets of Brent River College and Ashley College following the end of their first financial year.  
*All Schools Members were eligible to vote on this item.*  
All agreed. There were no objections and abstains.
- b. the funding of appropriate long term education for permanently excluded pupils who are not, following intervention and assessment, deemed suitable to return to mainstream school.  
*All Schools Members were eligible to vote on this item.*  
All agreed. There were no objections and abstains.
- c. the introduction of a discrete Day 6 provision for permanently excluded KS3 and KS4 pupils to enable the LA to meet its statutory duty.  
*All Schools Members were eligible to vote on this item.*  
All agreed. There were no objections and abstains.
- d. A further recommendation was requested verbally as part of this item but is in conjunction with Item 6 of this Forum. This was a request for £250,000 DSG allocation to Inclusion and Alternative Education from 2015-16.  
*All Schools Members were eligible to vote on this item.*  
All agreed. There were no objections and abstains.

### 6.0 **Dedicated Schools Grant – Outturn 2014-15 and Budget 2015-16**

*This report was for information and decision*

- 6.1 RJ presented this report. The report provides details on 2014-15 outturn, latest provisional DSG settlement for 2015-16, update on new commitments for 2015-16 and new request for DSG contribution to some of the central services. Section 3 of the report detailed Individual Schools Budget (ISB) 2014-15 outturn. There is a small increase in the overall borough's schools surplus with a reduction of schools in deficit from six schools to three.
- 6.2 Section 4 of the report highlights central expenditure. The DSG deficit has been repaid in line with the deficit recovery plan. It was proposed that a small contingency was held for future years to avoid DSG running into deficit again.



6.3 Section 5 of the report showed already approved additional items funded from DSG, including a further three items requested at this forum to be funded:

- a. Brent Outreach Autism Team requesting £60k. This was approved in Item 4 of this Forum.
- b. Inclusion & Alternative Education of £250k. This was approved in Item 5 of this Forum.
- c. Contribution to the Schools Finance Team – This was not approved but further information was requested at the next Forum.

6.4 RJ explained that £285k was requested to partly fund the Schools Finance Team and the Education Finance Team supporting the DSG. The team has previously been funded from General Fund to support the DSG whilst it has been in deficit. Now that the deficit is repaid, the Schools Forum is asked to fund the team's services from the DSG. This request is in line with the common arrangement of a number of other Local Authorities. This would fund the team for the statutory functions in addition to serving of the Schools Forum.

6.5 SN asked what would happen if this funding is not approved. What impact it would have to schools? GT replied that the Finance Department is to be reduced by 40%. A restructure is imminent and will be out for consultation in July. This funding would help to fund the core services. The Schools Forum did not feel that there was sufficient information to approve to fund the Schools Finance Team.

6.6 MH concluded by stating that the Schools Forum was unconvinced from the information presented and invited the LA to bring further information back including benchmarking on how the schools would be impacted if this funding was not approved. For all other items the report was noted and approved.

### **7.0 Schools Forum Revised Terms of Reference & Constitution** *This report was for consultation*

7.1 NT presented this report and went through the documents relating to this item and made reference to constitution which was compiled from the latest DfE guidance. She highlighted that most of the guidance are currently in practice but all needed to be written down so that it is clear going forward.

7.2 NT added that there were a number of members whose term of membership have come to an end, and there will therefore need to be an election between this Forum and the next. All members are eligible for re-election and will therefore be included in the

election, unless asked not to. SN stated that as she was leaving her post in the borough, she did not wish to be included within the next election.

7.3 LG referred to Page 5 where it indicates that the Trade Union Representative nominations will be sought from the Teachers' Panel. This should say that nominations and elections will be undertaken by the Teachers' Panel.

7.4 LB asked about paragraph 2.1.8 from Terms of Reference & Constitution where it indicates 'No Schools Forum member can represent more than one sector at the same time.' She wanted to know if this was from DfE or LA's advice. NT said it a number of LAs include this and it was felt that it would be good practice to ensure a wider representation of Brent schools. Members felt that it would not always be easy to comply with, especially when it is difficult to fill some vacancies. After some discussion it was decided that paragraph 2.1.8 should be removed from the revised constitution.

7.5 Paragraph 2.2.4 stated that where a vacancy has not been filled within three months, London Borough of Brent shall appoint a member. NT said this was from the DfE guidance. Schools Forum felt that this should be done with their approval. This was therefore amended to say that the member will be appointed in consultation with the Schools Forum.

## 8.0 AOB

8.1 ML wanted to discuss the rate per pupil when schools take on additional pupils under the school expansion programme. He felt that his school had been underfunded since they started taking on primary pupils. They have been funded £3,300 instead of the rate that they receive under General Annual Grant (GAG). In some cases they have been funded under Rising Rolls which would have been a lower rate than £3,300. He asked that if the schools are to expand, they should be funded at an equal rate as other pupils. GB agreed as her school is permanently expanding from September 2015. NT explained that for 2015-16 onwards, permanent expansions were being funded through the funding formula and this will not be an issue going forward for those schools. However for bulge classes and schools that are temporarily expanding, they will continue to be funded as before. ML asked that the Schools Forum made a decision that all pupils would be funded equally. If this was not agreed, it would send the wrong message to schools thinking about expansion. GT said that if the permanent expansion funding was an issue, it has not been escalated to her and agreed to take it away for further investigation and resolution.

GT



- 8.2 It was ML and SN's last Forum as they are leaving their current posts within Brent. MH thanked both for their contribution to Schools Forum and wished them all the best for the future.
- 8.3 MH congratulated LJ for being appointed as a Mayor of Brent as well as receiving an OBE.
- 8.4 The Forum ended at 8.25pm.

### **ACTION LOG**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete by</b>	<b>Owner</b>
1	Update on VAT – why the VA schools are not exempted from paying VAT on the governors' liability of capital funding and Academies are exempted. A letter has been written to DfE but no response has been received. It was requested that this was followed up.	Sept 15	Cate Duffy /MP
2	Update on additional School Meals funding for pureed and kosher meals No reply has been received from DfE on this and it was required that this was followed up.	Sept 15	Cate Duffy /MP
3	Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application. This will be brought to September Forum.	Sept 15	CC
4	Review of impact of funding a full-time post to manage Early Years Pupil Premium Grant. Update on EY PPG payments.	Sept 15	SG/GT
5	Review of the hourly rate for schools taking on pupils under the expansion programme	Sept 15	GT/MP