



**Schools Forum
26 February 2014**

**Report from
the Director of Children & Families**

For Information and Consultation

Schools Forum Membership & Voting rights

1. Membership

- 1.1. The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 provides the framework for appointment of members but allows a degree of discretion in order to meet local needs. Local Authorities are able to decide on the size and composition of their forum and the forum members' terms of office.
- 1.2. In October 2013 the EFA released an operational and good practice guide on Schools Forums. The recommendation is that Schools Forums must contain representatives from primary and secondary schools, unless no primary or secondary schools are maintained by the local authority. In addition, where there are maintained special schools, nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), at least one member from each sector must be represented.
- 1.3. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 states that the forum must comprise:
 - 1.3.1. Elected school members;
 - 1.3.2. Elected Academies members;
 - 1.3.3. Appointed non-schools members.
 Schools and Academies members combined should be at least two thirds of the forum's membership. (Schools members are defined as primary, secondary, special, nursery and PRUs.)
- 1.4. In addition, the local authority has discretion to divide these groups into any of the following sub-groups:
 - 1.4.1. Head Teachers;
 - 1.4.2. Governors;
 - 1.4.3. Head Teachers and Governors;
 - 1.4.4. Representatives of the particular school category.

1.5. Brent's current membership make up is shown below.

	Head Teacher	Governor	Other	Total	%
Primary (Maintained)	5	5		10	36%
Secondary (Maintained)	1	1		2	7%
Academy (All)	3	3		6	21%
Nursery	1	1		2	7%
Special	1	1		2	7%
Early Years PVI			2	2	7%
PRU			1	1	4%
14-19 Partnership			1	1	4%
Trade Union			1	1	4%
Primary School Advisor			1	1	4%
Total	11	11	6	28	100%

1.6. The distribution between Primary, Secondary and Academy representatives was last calculated based on October 2012 pupil numbers. It was agreed that in the future the total primary and secondary schools representation (maintained and academy) would not exceed eighteen, but that the distribution would be reviewed in line with changes in the maintained schools population resulting from academy conversions.

1.7. The current membership list is attached as Appendix A. It was reported at the 18th September 2013 Forum that membership will be revisited annually in June to take account of any academy conversions.

1.8. The table below shows the pupil numbers in Brent as recorded on the October 2013 school census, and takes account of one expected primary school conversion in early 2014/15, as well as non-recoupment academies.

	Oct 2013 Pupil Nos	Proportion	Expected Representation	Current Representation	Proportion	Variance
Maintained Primary	24,359	54.8%	10	10	55.6%	0
Maintained Secondary	4,682	10.5%	2	2	11.1%	0
Academy Primary	2,133	4.8%	1	0	0.0%	-1
Academy Secondary	13,309	29.9%	5	6	33.3%	1
	44,483	100.0%	18	18	100.0%	0

1.9. The table assumes that primary and secondary schools (maintained and academy) membership remains at eighteen, and shows that the current distribution is fully representative of the sectors. However currently academy membership is not split between primary and secondary phases. It is therefore proposed that the Schools Forum membership should be amended to reflect this split. It is also recommended that the academy representation should include at least one non-recoupment academy representative. This change would not instigate a change to the current members, as there is currently one non-recoupment academy representative on the forum, and also two Heads of an all-through academy and one of them can represent the primary academy phase.

1.10. There is also one potential special school conversion for 2014/15. With the current representation for Special schools being one head teacher and one governor, it is recommended to change this split to reflect the academy conversion. This would then be

amended to one maintained special representative and one special academy representative.

2. Sub-Groups

2.1. It was agreed at the last Schools Forum that a review of all the sub-groups would take place to decide whether they should continue and to determine whether they are currently serving the purpose for which they were formed. As part of this review all members of the sub-groups were asked to provide feedback.

2.2. Early Years Sub-Group

2.2.1. The Early Years Sub-Group was formed in 2008 with the aim of developing the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). The sub-group now oversees all matters associated with the early years funding for schools and the PVI sector.

2.2.2. The general consensus of the sub-group representatives is that this sub-group serves a valuable purpose and is the only avenue for exchanging ideas, policies and practice between the schools and the PVI's.

2.2.3. Since the sub-groups formation, the following anomalies have been identified and reviewed as part of the sub-group:

- Full-time/Part-time provision;
- PVI entitlement;
- Grading of nurseries and PVI's;
- Staff competencies in PVI's and ratios of pupils;
- Changes to NEG in relation to PVI's being included;
- Changes to NEG and the funding of nursery classes;
- Special educational needs in the private and public sectors;
- Increase in nursery places;
- Parity for all nursery funding;
- Deciding on formulas that were equitable;
- Comparisons with other Local Authorities;
- Two year old projects;
- Structure of personnel of EYSFF in Brent.

2.2.4. This sub-group currently has two representatives – one each for nursery and primary schools. Under the sub-groups constitution all representatives serve for two years. This was last reviewed in September 2012.

2.2.5. It is recommended that this sub-group continues in its current form. The range and depth of issues dealt with at the sub-group is ongoing and would not be effective if dealt with at full Schools Forum meetings. Both officers and representatives find this sub-group useful to review anomalies, exchange good practice and effect change in relation to the early years funding.

2.3. SEN Sub-Group

2.3.1. The SEN sub-group was originally set up in 2011 to deal with the SEN overspend, and the introduction of the new national funding formula, as well as a range of funding issues regarding how pupils with additional needs and statements were funded and to make sure that the funding formula is linked to overall SEN policy, both locally and nationally.

2.3.2. This sub-group has been a useful forum for addressing a complex range of issues and the general consensus, again, is that this sub-group should continue.

2.3.3. The issues that are currently dealt with by the sub-group includes:

- Reviews of the funding formula and banding system for special schools, in consultation with special schools;
- Bandings of statemented pupils;
- Reviews of the formula for funding Additional Resource Provisions;
- Monitoring provision of SEN pupils by Brent schools
- Transitional protection for schools with high numbers of pupils with statements
- Post 16 FE eligibility policy and implementation
- Monitoring SEN spend and placements

2.3.4. The current representation on the sub-group includes one of each of the following: nursery head, primary representative, special head, secondary/academy head, academy governor, trade union representative

2.3.5. This sub-group is recommended to continue. With changes in SEN funding and policy ongoing, and the nature of complexity over these issues, this sub-group is vital in terms of reviewing, monitoring and agreeing changes. The discussions involved in these issues would not be effective in a full School Forum meeting, and both officers and representatives would like this sub-group to continue its current form.

2.4. Schools Sub-Group

2.4.1. The schools sub-group was created in 2013 to address Brent's very low primary:secondary ratio being 1:1.09. This arose as part of the funding reforms, and was the lowest in the country. As a result the MFG was the highest in the country and this needed to be addressed.

2.4.2. This sub-group was fundamental in addressing the ratio imbalance and has raised the ratio to 1:1.26 (closer to the 2013/14 national average of 1:1.27). As such the sub-group has met its objectives. However, it was agreed at the last Schools Forum that if the ratio was found to fall in future years to below 1:1.25 or to rise by a similar percentage, that this should again be reviewed and addressed by the sub-group.

2.4.3. The sub-group is currently made up of two representatives from each of the primary and secondary sectors, split between one Head Teacher and one Governor each.

2.4.4. It is recommended that this sub-group temporarily continues until the 2015/16 budget is set. Meetings will be diarised, but if there are no issues arising or significant agenda items they will be cancelled.

3. **Voting Rights**

3.1. The Schools Forum may determine its own voting procedures, except:

- The funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives;
- De-delegations are limited to the specific primary and secondary phases of maintained schools members.

3.2. The good practice guide is clear on what members can vote on. An extract of this is attached as a separate Appendix B, along with the voting rights of each member of the Brent's Schools Forum in Appendix C.

3.3. In summary

- Schools members can vote on all Schools Forum business including consultation on the funding formula. However only primary representatives can vote on primary school de-delegation, and only secondary representatives can vote on secondary school de-

delegation. Schools members, as defined previously, are primary, secondary, special, nursery and PRU representatives.

- Academy members can vote on all Schools Forum business (including consultation on the funding formula) except de-delegation, as de-delegation is not an option for academies.
- Non-school members cannot vote on de-delegation. Only PVI representatives can vote on consultation on the funding formula. All non-school members can then vote on anything else.

4. Recommendations & Consultation Points

4.1. The Schools Forum is requested to approve the following:

a. Membership:

- Maintain the current membership numbers;
- Change the Academy membership to include one non-recoupment academy representative and one primary academy representative;
- Change the special schools representation to split between maintained special and academy specials.

b. Sub-Groups

- Continue the Early Years sub-group in its current form;
- Continue the SEN sub-group in its current form;
- Temporarily continue the Schools sub-group for another six months, after which it will be disbanded.

4.2. The Schools Forum is requested to note the voting rights of members.

Appendices

- A. Brent Schools Forum Membership List
- B. Voting Rights extract
- C. Voting Rights of each member of the Brent Schools Forum

Background Papers

1. Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide, October 2013

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