

Islington Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 July 2020 at 2pm – held virtually.

PRESENT

Forum Members

Anita Grant (AG)	CEO, Islington Play Association
Andrew Bosi (AB)	Governor, Rotherfield Primary School
Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L)	Head teacher, Newington Green Primary School (Chair)
Cassie Moss (CM)	Head teacher, Yerbury Primary School (left at 2.50pm)
Jo Dibb (JD)	EGA Secondary – Executive Head of Islington Futures Federation (Vice-chair)
Tanya Watson (TW)	Head teacher, William Tyndale (Primary Academy)
Penny Barratt (PB)	Head teacher, The Bridge Special School (Academy)
Susan Service (SS)	Head teacher, Islington Arts & Media Secondary School
Francis Gonzalez (FrG)	Head teacher, Richard Cloudesley Special School
Maggie Elliott (ME)	Governor, Montem Primary School (Edventure Collaborative Federation with Drayton Park) (Vice-chair)
Joe Simpson (JS)	Governor, St Peter and St Paul's (arrived 2.50pm)

Other Attendees

Tim Partington (TP)	Head of Children's Services, Finance
Jane Wright (JW)	Manager Schools and EY Governance (Clerk)
Mark Taylor (MT)	Director of Learning and Schools
Debbie Stevenson (DS)	Head of Early Years and Schools Funding

Apologies

Lisa Horton (LH)	Head teacher, Hargrave Park Primary School
Fiona Godfrey (FG)	Head teacher, Kate Greenaway Nursery School
Vicky Linsley (VL)	Head teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy
Mita Pandya (MP)	Executive Head, Archway and Willow Children's Centres
Bryan Johnston (BJ)	Deputy Director of City and Islington Sixth Form College
Paul Lasok (PL)	Governor, St Aloysius Secondary School (and St Joseph's)
Penny Kenway (PK)	Head of Early Years and Childcare
Candy Holder (CH)	Head of Pupil Services

Not in attendance

Nigel Smith (NS)	Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
Cllr Rakhia Ismail (RI)	Elected member
Greg Crawford (GC)	Head teacher, Pooles Park

	Agenda item	Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/NOT IN ATTENDANCE Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L), Chair, welcomed all to the meeting.	

	Otherwise see above.	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2020</p> <p>a. Accuracy – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendment:</p> <p><i>Item 5, Early Years Block, page 7 – ‘All the above variances will be netted off’ not ‘netted of’.</i></p> <p>b. Matters Arising –</p> <p><i>i. <u>Item 3, p.3 - SCHOOLS FORUM COMPOSITION</u> JW yet to write to Secondary Academy heads again to seek a new representative. Will do in September.</i></p> <p><i>ii. <u>Item 9, p.10 - COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</u> MT said that there were no updates from the DfE on capital funding.</i></p> <p><i>TP was yet to contact Alan Grant for advice on schools having to top up salaries of furloughed staff to 100% - he will pick this up.</i></p> <p><i>iii. <u>Item 10, p.10 – School Forum Workplan</u> The DSG Subgroup had not had to ratify anything since the previous meeting.</i></p>	<p>JW</p> <p>TP</p>
3.	<p>SCHOOLS FORUM COMPOSITION</p> <p>The clerk (JW) gave a brief verbal update.</p> <p>Update on Membership</p> <p>3.1. There are currently two vacancies – primary head teacher and secondary academy head teacher.</p> <p>3.2. On 1 January 2021, there will also be these vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another second academy head teacher • Another primary head teacher • Two primary governors <p>3.3. Proposed actions/actions to be noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk (JW) to write to secondary academy heads in relation to current and forthcoming vacancies in September 2020 to ask to select two heads. • The clerk (JW) to seek nominations from one primary head teacher representative in September and for a second in November. • The clerk (JW) will arrange elections for two primary governor representatives in October/November. <p>Current members can stand again unless their school or federation is already represented on Schools Forum.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	<p>JW</p>

4. SCHOOL BALANCES (FINAL 2019-2020)

4.1. DS spoke to a report and spreadsheet that had been circulated. She had reported on provisional balances at the May Forum meeting.

4.2. The initial findings before information was available on schools' planned use of revenue balances earmarked for capital purposes were that:

- 2019-20 school balances totalled £10,274,842 compared to a balance of £11,732,678 in 2018-19, a decrease of £1.457m.
- five schools were in a deficit at year end 2019-20.
 - Drayton Park – additional costs throughout the year have put the school into a deficit position.
 - Duncombe - were due capital monies from LBI totalling £26,730
 - Prior Weston – due to opening balance issue, school were unaware of looming deficit
 - St Andrew's - additional costs throughout the year have put the school into a deficit position
 - AMSI – came into the year with a deficit and have reduced the deficit by £219k in 19-20.
- Kate Greenaway Nursery School have moved out of deficit.

4.3. **Update Report** – As of 6 July, 32 schools had submitted their planned use of surplus balances for capital/other purposes.

- The balances were now **£9,732,307 – decrease of £867,042 over 2018-19.**
- Six schools' balances were over 10% of their individual school budget (ISB) and nine schools over 15%.
- The five schools identified in the May report were still in deficit
- An additional four schools were forecasting a deficit in 2020/21:
 - Beacon High
 - Highbury Quadrant Primary
 - New River College
 - Montem Primary
- Of the nine schools in deficit, seven are supported through project groups, and all are receiving additional support from Schools' Finance.

AB queried the report saying that Duncombe was in deficit given it was due to receive funding from LBI. DS explained that it was required to show actual figures in the accounts for reconciliation purposes but to also add commentary to explain the context.

4.4. **Schools in surplus.** As is School Forum practice, MT, DS and AM-L will meet with the schools with balances over 10% over the past three years and who are not forecasting a deficit balance in 2020-21 to understand the context of the figures:

- Margaret McMillan Nursery
- Moreland Primary
- Elizabeth Garratt Anderson
- St Aloysius' College
- Richard Cloudesley Special School

FG commented that Richard Cloudesley's budget is volatile, given the small number of pupils and the high level of funding per pupil given their needs. For example, two LAs

	<p>have recently pulled out two pupils which means a loss of revenue of £100K. FG was pointing out that there may be good reasons for surpluses. FG also suggested taking in to account a school's overall income rather than simply the ISB as an indicator.</p> <p>LBI schools are doing relatively well compared to other LAs in relation to ISBs and High Needs budgets.</p> <p>DS commented that in –year forecasting was strong across the borough but years 2 and 3 less so in some schools.</p> <p>CM queried whether looking at years 2 and 3 forecasts was too unrealistic. DS stressed the importance of doing this to ensure medium to long-term sustainability of schools and, where forward planning is effective, schools are better able to adjust their budgets accordingly, including changes in workforce.</p> <p>JD said that while there has been a surplus at EGA for some time, there is likely to be a deficit in year three.</p> <p>DS confirmed that the conversations with the schools with surpluses will take place before Christmas.</p> <p>4.5. Forum was recommended to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 schools' balances position after deduction of earmarked revenue balances for capital purposes • The overall decrease in schools' balances • 2019-20 deficit schools and schools that have moved out of deficit in this period • Schools forecasting a deficit position for 2020-21 • That for schools with high balances, over 10%, meet with the Local Authority where they meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistently high balances exceeding 10% over a three-year period ○ Are not projecting a deficit balance in 2020-21 • Schools meeting the criteria are set out above. <p>NOTED</p>	DS
5.	<p>DSG OUTTURN FINAL 2019/20</p> <p>TP reported to a paper that had been circulated. LBI accounts had been finalised and there were no changes from the provisional report presented at May Forum.</p> <p>The final DSG outturn position for the financial year to 31 March 2020 was an underspend of £2.68m (1.5%), of which £2.46m related to balances from previous years.</p> <p>Schools Budget</p> <p>Centrally retained funding for Growth/Falling Rolls - a small underspend of £6K relating to unclaimed income from academies. This will be carried forward to 2020-21.</p> <p>The unallocated balance of £321k from the one-off cash payment in relation to the Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF) is being retained for use in 2020/21 as previously agreed by Schools Forum.</p> <p>De-delegated Budgets</p> <p>These underspends which will be rolled forward for their intended purpose in 2020/21:</p>	

- £15k underspend against the trade union facility time budget.
- £26k underspend against the de-delegated NQT release time budget.
- £32k unallocated secondary school priority support funding
- £8k unallocated schools in financial difficulty funding
- £192k underspend against the redundancy budget, a reduction of £80k on the previous monitoring report to Schools Forum.

Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

There is a £56k underspend against the CSSB block:

- £60K underspend in the School Admissions Service
- £27K unallocated CSSB funding

Set against this is £30K for under-achieving pupils is now included in the budget for 2020/21 (was removed in error in 2018/19 budget).

High Needs Block

A one-off contingency budget for high needs was carried forward by Schools Forum from the 2018/19 DSG underspend of £854k. An underspend had been expected, but post 16 costs had been higher than expected and there have been extra costs for example for outreach (via Richard Cloudeley). So there is an overspend of £110K. This is a very volatile area of expenditure.

The overspend will be partly met from the net underspend against the CSSB (£56k), leaving a balance of £54k that will be offset against the 2020/21 high needs budget.

Early Years Block

An underspend of £2,134k against the early years block is projected. £463k of this underspend is the 2-year-old balance from previous years and is being held to smooth in new funding arrangements for providers in future years.

These are the areas of overspend:

- £358k in relation to Early Years SEND following a significant increase in applications from settings during the year
- £16k overspend against the speech and language therapy budget
- £21k shortfall in funding for the Early Years Pupil Premium as eligibility was greater than the numbers used by the DfE to allocate funds to the Council.

And these areas of underspend:

- £25k in relation to the Disability Access Fund as eligibility was lower than the numbers used by the DfE to allocated funds to the Council.
- £96k staffing underspend across Children's Centres that is notionally funded by the DSG.

1,945k balance remains in the early years contingency budget.

All of the above variances will be netted off against the Early Years contingency budget and carried forward to 2020/21 (£1,671k).

	<p>AM-L asked why unallocated funding for secondary schools (priority support funding) could not be used for primary schools in financial difficulty. DS replied that it was a timing issue and unallocated funds would be allocated, in full, to relevant secondary schools in 2020-21 according to their funding bid. Priority support was being provided to Beacon High and AMSI.</p> <p>Schools in Financial Difficulty funding is allocated at year end to schools with balances below a certain level.</p> <p>As set out above, De-delegated Budget underspends belong to maintained schools and are automatically rolled forward for their intended purposes in the new year.</p> <p>CM asked if it would be possible for the figures in future to include percentages as well as monetary value. TP agreed to do this. The overall underspend is about 1.5% of DSG – underspends of 5% and over would be of concern to the DfE.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	TP
<p>6.</p>	<p>DSG ALLOCATIONS (in year)</p> <p>Deferred to the next meeting as the information had not been provided by the DfE.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>FALLING ROLLS – FUTURE YEAR’S CRITERIA</p> <p>DS reported to a paper that had been circulated.</p> <p>The Forum was asked to consider the current criteria and suggest changes for 2021-22. Any changes would form a part of the annual primary and secondary schools autumn 2020 consultation for future years’ funding. Primary and Secondary Schools would be consulted on any proposed changes during the autumn 2020. Forum would agree provisionally the arrangements for next year in November 2020, with a final formal agreement in January 2021.</p> <p>Falling rolls funding should only be used to support schools where the places are forecast to be needed over the short-medium term.</p> <p>The current criteria and funding methodology for Islington have been agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the DfE - The school must have been judged good or outstanding at their last OFSTED inspection. <i>DfE requirement</i> • The total number of pupils on roll (NOR) has dropped by at least 5% between last October census and the previous year’s October census. <i>Islington requirement</i> • Vacancy Capacity of school is a minimum of 15% of PAN (Published Admission Number). <i>Islington requirement</i> • Local planning data shows the places will be required within the next 3-5 years. • Schools receiving growth funding are excluded. <p>Appendix A showed indicative allocations for 2021-22 and the funding that has been allocated across all schools since 2014. The figures will be updated in the light of the October Schools Census 2020 and will be brought to Schools Forum in November.</p>	

Copenhagen has had four years' consecutive funding. Hungerford's funding was a one-off allocation agreed by Forum and Secretary of State following its forced academisation.

The Place Planning Report states Islington will be working in consultation with schools and school governors to address surplus capacity and this may include reductions to some schools Planned Admission Numbers (PAN). Reducing the PAN in some schools may negate the draw on the falling rolls funding in future years.

The falling rolls budget for 2020-21 increased to £400k to recognise the increased demand. But allocations for 2021-22 have reduced to £133k. However, there are currently five schools that do not hold a good or outstanding Ofsted rating who would otherwise benefit from falling rolls funding. Should all five move to good or outstanding the level of required funding would increase to £562k.

DS suggested that Falling Rolls funding be limited to three consecutive years. This would allow the benefitting schools time and additional resources to plan their adjusted workforce requirements in future years whilst also providing some level of protection to retain staffing levels in the short term to meet the needs of the school.

CM commented that Appendix A was helpful, but it would be good to link in to schools' budgetary surpluses and asked if the budget position of schools could be included in the criteria. DS said this was very helpful and she would look into that.

FG reminded the meeting of the importance of the context of surpluses.

ME commented that when looking at match funding for capital funding, past balances are taken into account. She acknowledged it was difficult for schools not good or outstanding who were waiting for an Ofsted visit.

AB was concerned that local planning data will indicate more places needed in the next five years that will be needed. The number of homes being built does not equate to the number of children needing school. He felt that new housing may reduce overcrowding but will not equate to more children.

JS queried how robust our data is upon which places planning is based.

MT commented that GLA data has been inaccurate, but we have not had significant capital developments based on these figures. If there is an upsurge of children, we will have sufficient places.

Another useful suggestion was numbers of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium. However, disadvantaged schools may not necessarily be in the areas where we need places.

It was agreed we should avoid an over-complex formula for little or no gain.

Recommendation

That Schools Forum agrees to consult on three consecutive years of falling rolls funding. The decision will be applied to the 2021-22 financial year, following the annual consultation with schools.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

8.	<p>COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE</p> <p>The May report set out all the sources of support to schools and settings from the Government.</p> <p>The DfE has broadly not changed its stance in terms of expecting schools to by and large meet additional costs of COVID from their budgets. The DfE was still not agreeing to support loss of income (lettings, parental fees, etc) – funding was for exceptional costs only.</p> <p>In the 24 June guidance, DfE clarified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools cannot claim for exceptional costs if that would add to their existing historic surpluses • Schools can claim if their historic deficit is due to increase or the extra costs would prevent the planned repayment of a historic deficit. <p>Exceptional costs are still just in relation to premises, extra cleaning and refunds for Free School Meals vouchers/costs. Schools will be able to claim in the autumn, details to be announced.</p> <p>DS reminded schools that they needed to submit their claims for Exceptional Costs by 21 July 2020.</p> <p><i>AG left the meeting at this point (3.04pm)</i></p> <p>AM-L asked if the Government would fund enhanced cleaning into the autumn. DS said details of what can be claimed has yet to be announced.</p> <p>AM-L had written to the DfE asking about funding postage and photocopying in relation to home learning packs for families with digital access issues. She said she would let Forum and the LA know the outcome of this.</p> <p>Catch-up Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £650m – for primary, secondary and special schools to spend on one-to-one or small group tuition. This is to be allocated to the schools and can be used at the head teachers’ discretion. No news yet on allocations to schools – LA pressing DfE on that. • £350m – to subsidise a National Tutoring Programme to help pupils most at need and will support the most disadvantaged pupils to access tutors over the 2020-21 academic year. One-off new funding – though it was noted that the existing £55m Year 7 Catch-Up grant funding will cease from 2020-21. <p>Early Years and 16-19s not included in Catch-up Funding.</p> <p>For secondaries - summer schools will be funded retrospectively.</p> <p>MT asked if £650m is ring fenced for disadvantaged pupils. DS replied that this funding is to be used to support all pupils make up for lost teaching time.</p>	Schools
		AM-L

	<p>Schools in Financial Difficulty funding proposal</p> <p>The DfE have confirmed Local Authority maintained schools (including pupil referral units) and academies/free schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This will ensure that they are able to continue to pay their staff, and meet their other regular financial commitments e.g. payments to their regular contracted suppliers; cleaning; catering.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the LA proposes to allocate a proportion of the centrally-held Schools in Financial Difficulty Budget to support schools to move to wider opening to all children in September. The amounts per school are set out in Appendix A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third will be allocated in each term from summer term 2020. • Allocations will relate to the number of pupils in October 2019 • Flat rate of £500 for primary and £1,000 for secondary schools that are reporting a balance of less than 5% of their ISB • All schools will receive £2 per pupil. <p>Early Years</p> <p>There has been no further guidance on the financial aspects of early years funding although it is expected that an announcement will be made before the end of term.</p> <p>The primary concern for Local Authorities is the 2020-21 funding adjustment which uses both January 2020 and 2021 census points to inform retrospective adjustments. Whilst the DfE have not released its decision on how this will be treated, it is of the opinion that no funding adjustments at all will take place for 2020-21 and, rather, the focus will be on how to fund for future years. Schools Forum will be kept updated with details as they arise.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>That Schools Forum note the COVID-19 financial updates.</p> <p>That Schools Forum agree to the summer term financial allocation of Schools in Difficulty funding with a view to reviewing in the autumn and spring terms.</p> <p>NOTED AND AGREED</p>	MT
<p>9.</p>	<p>SCHOOL FORUM WORKPLAN</p> <p>DS spoke to a short report that had been distributed.</p> <p>Two areas had been moved back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit programme – not happened yet - and • High Needs Strategy. A consultation in the spring term was postponed, due to COVID-19 and will now commence in early autumn. This will come to Forum in the autumn for information. 	

	<p>ME commented on the fact that reports from subgroups had dropped since earlier in the year. DS confirmed that subgroup meetings had not been taking place apart from the Capital sub group – this will be picked up in the autumn.</p> <p>DS reported that in relation to the Capital Subgroup, the matched funding process ended on 13 July 2020 and schools will be notified of the outcomes of bids.</p>	<p>DS/AM-L /Suzie Crawford</p>															
<p>11.</p>	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p> <p>The ESFA has confirmed that Schools Forum meetings can continue to be held virtually up to the end of March 2021.</p> <p>AM-L felt that it would be better to hold meetings in person wherever possible. Meetings will be virtual in autumn 2020 – to be reviewed at Christmas.</p> <p>Provisional dates:</p> <p><u>SCHOOLS FORUM</u></p> <p>Thursday 15 October 2020, 2-4pm</p> <p>Thursday 26 November 2020, 2-4pm:</p> <p>Thursday 21 January 2021, 2-4pm</p> <p>Thursday 20 May 2020, 2-4pm</p> <p>Thursday 15 July 2020, 2-4pm</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="183 1272 1236 1624"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><u>DSG SUBGROUP</u></th> <th><u>CHAIRS' AGENDA PLANNING SUBGROUP</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Thursday 8 October 2020</td> <td>2-3pm</td> <td>3-4pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 14 January 2021</td> <td>2-3pm</td> <td>3-4pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 13 May 2021</td> <td>2-3pm</td> <td>3-4pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 8 July 2021</td> <td>2-3pm</td> <td>3-4pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>EARLY YEARS SUBGROUP</u></p> <p>Friday 25 September 2020, 1-3pm</p> <p>Friday 4 December 2020, 1-3pm</p> <p>Friday 15 January 2021, 1-3pm</p> <p>Friday 7 May 2021, 1-3pm</p>		<u>DSG SUBGROUP</u>	<u>CHAIRS' AGENDA PLANNING SUBGROUP</u>	Thursday 8 October 2020	2-3pm	3-4pm	Thursday 14 January 2021	2-3pm	3-4pm	Thursday 13 May 2021	2-3pm	3-4pm	Thursday 8 July 2021	2-3pm	3-4pm	
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CAPITAL SUB GROUP

Thursday 12 November 2020, 12.30-2pm

Thursday 24 February 2021, 12.30-2pm

Thursday 13 May 2021, 12.30-2pm

HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP

Monday 16 November 2020, 11am to 1pm

Monday 1 March 2021, 11am to 1pm

Monday 17 May 2021, 11am to 1pm

The meeting closed at 3.50pm

DRAFT