

Islington Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 2pm – held virtually (MS Teams).

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
Jo Dibb (JD)	EGA Secondary – Executive Head of Islington Futures Federation (Vice-chair)
Tanya Watson (TW)	Head teacher, William Tyndale (Primary Academy)
Lisa Horton (LH)	Head teacher, Hargrave Park Primary School
Fiona Maccorquodale (FM)	Head teacher, Prior Weston Primary School
Penny Barratt (PB)	Head teacher, The Bridge Special School (Academy)
Susan Service (SS)	Head teacher, Islington Arts & Media Secondary School
Paul Lasok (PL)	Governor, St Aloysius Secondary School (and St Joseph's)
Vicky Linsley (VL)	Head teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy
Mita Pandya (MP)	Executive Head, Archway and Willow Children's Centres
Claire Hersey (CHe)	Principal Finance Officer, City of London Academy Trust
Maggie Elliott (ME)	Governor, Montem Primary School (Edventure Collaborative Federation with Drayton Park) (Vice-chair)

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

Observer

Tim Barber (TB)	Head, Learning Quarter Partnership
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Apologies

Fiona Godfrey (FG)	Head teacher, Kate Greenaway Nursery School
Francis Gonzalez (FrG)	Head teacher, Richard Cloudesley Special School
Nigel Smith (NS)	Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
Candy Holder (CH)	Head of Pupil Services
Joe Simpson (JS)	Governor, St Peter and St Paul's (had technical issues)
Bryan Johnston (BJ)	Deputy Director City & Islington Sixth Form College (ditto)
Cllr Rakhia Ismail (RI)	Elected member

	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies for absence/not in attendance</p> <p>AM-L welcomed all to the meeting, including Tim Barber who was observing. Apologies as above.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2020</p> <p>a. Accuracy – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting..</p> <p>b. Matters Arising – there were no matters arising.</p> <p>AGREED</p>	JW
3.	<p>Schools forum composition</p> <p>The clerk (JW) spoke to a report previously circulated.</p> <p>3.1. Update on elections/appointments since last Forum meeting</p> <p>3.1.a. Secondary academy representative</p> <p>Vicky Linsley had been appointed unopposed to a further term starting on 1 January 2021.</p> <p>3.1.b. Primary Governor representatives</p> <p>Maggie Elliott and Andrew Bosi had been appointed unopposed to a further term as primary governor representatives starting from 1 January 2021.</p> <p>3.2. Upcoming elections/appointments</p> <p>3.2.a. Spring term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two primary head representatives (one vacancy, one term of office ending 31.3.21 – LH). ○ One secondary head representative (term of office ending 31.3.21 – JD) ○ One primary academy representative (term of office ending 31.3.21 – TW) <p>3.2.b. Other future vacancies in 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non Schools Member Early Years Practitioner representative from 30.8.21 (currently MP) ○ Non Schools Voluntary & Community representative from 27.9.21 (currently AG) ○ PRU (New River College) from 25 October 2021 (currently NS) <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk will invite nominations for the two primary head and one secondary head representatives in February/March – if there are more nominations than vacancies, elections will be arranged. 	Clerk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk will write to primary academies asking them to inform her of their representative (academies make their own arrangements to select representatives). • Non Schools Member Early Years Practitioner representative – to raise at summer term meeting of heads of children’s centres • Non Schools Member Voluntary and Community representative – to raise at Early Years Providers Forum in summer term (attended by private, voluntary and independent nurseries) <p>NOTED AND AGREED</p> <p>Update after the meeting: there will need to be an election for Vice-chair at the next Schools Forum meeting as JD will have left. Further details to come.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>2020-21 DSG Budget Monitor</p> <p>TP gave a verbal report (due to pressures dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic).</p> <p>Schools Block - there was a projected underspend of £46K. Options for how to spend this were discussed under Item 7.</p> <p>High Needs – there could be further underspend due to the delayed rollout of the area based additional needs funding as a result of Covid-19.</p> <p>Early Years – there was £1.7m contingency and an in-year underspend of £400K. This will be useful this term and next due to the move back to funding of free early education places based on participation, given we know numbers are likely to be low in the January 2021 EY Census. The DfE is providing protection of up to 85% compared to the census in January 2020, but we stand to lose £650K for every 10% reduction. The LA and settings have been lobbying the DfE about the move back to participation funding in the circumstances. One option being looked at is another census in summer 2021.</p> <p>At the next Forum, there will be a written monitoring report.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>2021-22 DSG Settlement</p> <p>DS reported to a spreadsheet that had been circulated.</p> <p>We received the settlement on 17 December 2020.</p> <p>Schools Block –Despite falling school rolls, there was an increase of £7.8m which includes Teachers’ Pay and Pension grant (£5.2m), previously paid as separate grants. The remaining £2.6m represents the additional funds announced by the Government as a part of the three-year funding settlement. The direct comparison year-on-year demonstrates a £891k increase.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>2021-22 School Funding Formula</p> <p>DS spoke to a report previously circulated.</p>	

At the November 2020 meeting, Schools Forum agreed the principles and changes to the formula listed below following the consultation with schools on School Funding 2021-22 which ran from 5 October to 16 November 2020.

- Continue to move towards the National Funding Formula (NFF) as far as is possible (to avoid cliff-edge when the NFF comes in nationally).
- Continue to retain Growth Funding
- Continue to retain Falling Rolls Funding
- Continue to retain funding for services through the Central School Services Block as previously agreed with Schools Forum; final allocations to be presented at the January 2021 Forum
- Continue de-delegated services at the current level
- Explore the provision of the additional de-delegated services
- Request information from the Insurance and Risk Protection team to allow discussion on RPA provision

For formula purposes, there had been a reduction in pupil numbers between the October 2019 and October 2020 Census: 315 fewer primary pupils and 11 fewer secondary.

High Needs funding not final – we will receive the final settlement for that in March.

Early Years – the rate for three and four year olds was raised nationally but our rate is already above this so there is no increase in next year's rate. There will be an increase of £0.08 for two-year-old provision.

The DfE is encouraging early years providers to include all registered children / January starters whose paperwork has been completed in the EY Census on this day, 21 January – all children who would have been on roll and present but for COVID. They have said they will protect funding up to 85% providing there is evidence of the roll increasing / children returning.

CM asked how much is new money. DS replied there is £2.6m in new Schools Block National Funding Formula (NFF) money.

The final sums for Growth and Falling Rolls were to be agreed under Item 7. This funding, along with explicit growth funding (for schools not yet reached their full cohort – ie COLPAI), NNDR business rates and inflation of the PFI element, is top sliced from the Schools Block before money is allocated to schools in line with the formula.

The biggest factor value is the number of pupils in a school.

Following a revaluation of IDACI bandings, most IDACI factors have increased by 3%. However, in recognition that pupils previously identified in the highest deprived IDACI banding, A, have been revalued at lower bandings, bands B-D have increased by about 9%.

Appendix A sets out the impact of the proposed formula on individual schools. Forum were asked to note that column N represented the budget movement when compared to the previous year (net of movement in NNDR and Teachers Pay and Pension grant increases). Column P represented an estimated budget movement based on pupil numbers only. The difference between the two columns represented the increase in funding as part of the Government's three-year settlement agreement.

	<p>There will be no cap on gainers. The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) can be in the range of 0.5 to 2% increase – Islington will have a 1.56% increase per pupil amount.</p> <p>Forum was being asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agree 2021-22 formula factors and values Agree final values retained for Growth and Falling Rolls <p>AGREED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note final 2021-22 school budget allocations <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>2021-22 - Growth / Falling Rolls proposals</p> <p>The purpose of this item was for Forum to agree how to manage underspends of growth and falling rolls funding.</p> <p>The financial position remains unchanged from that reported to Schools Forum in October 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth – underspend £70k Falling Rolls – underspend £94k <p>One suggestion was to redistribute the overall underspend of £164k to all schools prior to the end of the year based on pupil numbers (October Census 2019) – Appendix A illustrated the breakdown by schools.</p> <p>It might, however, be prudent to wait until May 2021, when data regarding 2021-22 pupil numbers becomes available. Should the numbers generate the need for a greater budget to be held for falling rolls in 2022-23, the £164k could be used without affecting future formula funding. By pursuing this second option it would allow funding to be directed to schools who may be impacted by falling rolls, should the need arise. Pupil data for the 2022-23 academic year will be available in May. In this case, the funding would be carried forward to next financial year, and an updated report would be presented to Forum in the summer term outlining further proposals for allocations.</p> <p>JD agreed with the approach, although she noted that with the suspension of Ofsted inspections, schools ‘requiring improvement’ in their last Ofsted would still not be eligible for falling rolls funding, however much they had improved since their last Ofsted inspection. MT said that that issue will be considered at London Regional meetings with HMI and Ofsted.</p> <p>JD asked whether it would be possible to disapply the regulations set by the DfE in relation to Good/Outstanding Schools within the Falling Rolls criteria.</p> <p>DS clarified that it would not be possible for the 2021-22 financial year but should Ofsted inspections remain unchanged, this could be explored by Forum in the autumn term.</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	

	<p>7.1. 2020-21 – growth and falling rolls underspends – Schools’ Forum are asked to agree to carry forward the £164k underspend until the summer term.</p> <p>7.2. 2021-22 – Schools’ Forum agree to the budgets centrally retained for growth and falling rolls; £300k and £400k respectively, noting the potential balances in each will be netted at the year-end.</p> <p>AGREED</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>2021-22 School Central Retention</p> <p>TP spoke to a report that had been circulated before the meeting. Forum was being asked to agree proposed central retention in the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and the Early Years (EY) Block and to note the proposed change to central retention in the High Needs (HN) block.</p> <p>TP asked Forum to note that the HN Block is still being reconciled, therefore there is likely be some movements in allocations. Updated budget figures with any movements will be reported back to Schools Forum.</p> <p>Forum had already agreed to retaining funding within the Schools Block (SB) for growth (£300K) and falling rolls (£400K) funding.</p> <p>The main focus for this discussion was on the proposed central retention in the CSSB.</p> <p>The expected reduction in historic duties funding has occurred (£132k), however this has largely been offset by the roll-in of Teachers Pay and Pensions Grant (£101k) and a small increase in the funding for ongoing duties (£6k). The net reduction in CSSB funding for 2021/22 is £25k. This reduces the need to make savings against the CSSB in the short-term.</p> <p>A review of the Council’s overheads charged to the CSSB has indicated that these can be reduced by £194k as funding is centrally retained for fewer services than in 2017/18. This was agreed by the DSG Sub Group on 14 January 2021. This means we can make significant savings against the CSSB in 2021/22 without impacting on service provision for schools. It also means we will have delivered some savings against the CSSB in advance of the continued phasing out of funding for historic duties over the following three years (2022/23 to 2024/25); there is still £527k of funding for historic duties in our CSSB. We will still need to plan for this reduction, but have more time to do it.</p> <p>High Needs – the only change we are making to central retention in the High Needs Block is an additional £100k for fixed term appointments for part-time SEND Support Co-ordinator and Schools Area SENCO roles given increased demand for support for SEND. This is a local authority decision so Forum was being asked to note this.</p> <p>Early Years - central retention remains capped at 5% of Early Years Block funding for the statutory entitlements to free early education and childcare for three and four year olds and two year olds in 2020/21. It is proposed to continue to retain funding in line with the 5% cap in 2021/22, which is the equivalent to £979k, a below inflation increase of £13k (1.3%) on 2020/21. The report set out the central services to be funded through the retention, as set out in the recent EY Funding Consultation, including Finance services, ICT and data services, Family Information Service and EY Foundation Stage Team strategy and management. Responses from the EY consultation had been</p>	

	<p>circulated to Forum just before the meeting. The EY subgroup had ratified the proposals in principle, for Forum to agree formally.</p> <p>FM asked if there were any plans to expand EY places given the reduced take up of two year olds. PK responded that while some places were vacant, individual institutions were full with a waiting list. Schools were urged to contact the LA to discuss their places. The short Childcare Sufficiency Assessment carried out in the autumn showed a 20% decrease in EY take up due to COVID but also a falling birth rate and the movement of 0-5s out of the borough. Take up of three and four year olds was around 83%/84% - that of two year olds had reached 70% (relatively high) before COVID. Work is ongoing to encourage parents to take up the free offers and they are directed to current provision. The highest vacancy rates are in the private sector and nursery classes in primary schools.</p> <p>It was recommended that Schools Forum:</p> <p>8.1) Agree the proposed central retention in the CSSB - AGREED b) Note the proposed change to central retention in the High Needs block - NOTED c) Agree the proposed central retention in the Early Years Block - AGREED d) Agree the overall resultant DSG allocations in Appendix A (good practice not a requirement for Schools Forum to agree this) - AGREED</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>2021-22 Early Years Funding Formula</p> <p>DS spoke to a paper that had been previously circulated. As had been reported above, the results of the EY consultation had been circulated, which had informed the decision made under Item 8 above in relation to EY.</p> <p>AM-L had had discussions with Forum members prior to the meeting, and they were raising their concerns about falling rolls. They wanted to know what was happening at a strategic level about this.</p> <p>MT responded that work is ongoing as shown by the proposed closure of Clerkenwell Parochial – discussions with the Diocese had been delayed by COVID. He added that we have to be careful as falling rolls in neighbouring boroughs in outer London is not an issue. Also there is the risk that if the LA reduces provision, the DfE could try to use vacated facilities for a free school. The Education and Childcare Commissioning Board will be meeting soon to discuss the situation.</p> <p>AB flagged up that on top of falling rolls, students are experiencing problems with Catch Up and was querying what we should do to address these issues.</p> <p>MT agreed with AM-L that we must not be passive and we can do something about the falling rolls situation.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Schools Forum Workplan</p> <p>DS spoke to a report that had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that Falling Rolls should be a standing agenda item for Schools Forum.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	<p>DS</p>

11. AOB and close of meeting

Schools Forum noted that this was the last Forum meeting that Mark Taylor would be attending as he was leaving at the end of the month. Forum thanked him for his invaluable support to schools for many years. MT thanked the Forum and stated it had been a pleasure to work with such a strong collaborative group.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

SCHOOLS FORUM

Thursday 20 May 2020, 2-4pm

Thursday 15 July 2020, 2-4pm

DSG SUBGROUP

**CHAIRS' AGENDA
PLANNING SUBGROUP**

Thursday 13 May 2021

2-3pm

3-4pm

Thursday 8 July 2021

2-3pm

3-4pm

EARLY YEARS SUBGROUP

Friday 7 May 2021, 1-3pm

CAPITAL SUB GROUP

Thursday 24 February 2021, 12.30-2pm

Thursday 13 May 2021, 12.30-2pm

HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP

Monday 1 March 2021, 11am to 1pm

Monday 17 May 2021, 11am to 1pm