

# Islington Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 25 November 2021 at 2pm – held virtually (MS Teams)

Meeting documents and minutes published on [Islington Schools Forum webpage](#).

## PRESENT

### Forum Members

Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L)	Head teacher, Newington Green Primary School (Chair)
Paul Lasok (PL)	Governor, St Aloysius Secondary School (and St Joseph's)
Maggie Elliott (ME)	Governor, Montem Primary School (Adventure Collaborative Federation with Drayton Park ) (Vice-chair)
Andrew Bosi (AB)	Governor, Rotherfield Primary School
Joe Simpson (JS)	Governor, St Peter and St Paul's Catholic Primary
Claire Hersey (CHe)	Principal Finance Officer, City of London Academy Trust
Sally Franklin (SF)	Head teacher, North Islington Nursery and Children's Centre
Ana Sevilla (ASe)	Executive Head, New River Green and Packington Children's Centres
Alan Streeter (AS)	Head teacher, Beacon High Secondary School (Islington Futures Federation)
Nigel Smith (NS)	Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
Jenny Lewis (JL)	Head teacher, Thornhill Primary School
Cassie Moss (CM)	Head teacher, Yerbury Primary School (Vice-chair)
Tanya Watson (TW)	Head teacher, William Tyndale (Primary Academy)
Fiona MacCorquodale (FM)	Head teacher, Prior Weston Primary School & Children's Centre
Penny Barratt (PB)	Head teacher, The Bridge Special School (Academy)
Susan Service (SS)	Head teacher, Arts & Media School Islington
Patrick Mildren (PM)	Head teacher, Canonbury Primary School
Anita Grant (AG)	CEO, Islington Play Association
Francis Gonzalez (FrG)	Head teacher, Richard Cloudesley Special School
Coleen Marshall (CMa)	14 to 19s partnership - City & Islington Sixth Form College
Vicky Linsley (VL)	Head teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy

### Other Attendees

Cate Duffy (CD)	Interim Corporate Director People (beginning of meeting)
Sarah Callaghan (SC)	Director of Learning and Culture
Tim Partington (TP)	Head of Children's Services, Finance
Jane Wright (JW)	Manager Schools and Early Childhood Governance (Clerk)
Debbie Stevenson (DS)	Head of Early Years and Schools Finance Services
Alison Cramer (AC)	Assistant Director School Support and Information Services
Susan Woodland (SW)	Interim Finance Manager (LBI)

### Apologies

Candy Holder (CH)	Head of Pupil Services
Cllr Rakhia Ismael	Non-executive LA member
Ann Curran	Head of New River Green Children's Centre (supporting ASe)

	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome/Apologies for absence/not in attendance</b></p> <p>AM-L welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies as above and it was noted that CMa would need to leave the meeting at 3.30pm. The clerk, JW, advised Forum that she had received an email from Cllr RI sending her apologies and her resignation from Forum that day. VL had contacted Governor Services to say that she would need to leave at 3pm.</p> <p>Cate Duffy (CD) was attending for the beginning of the meeting. It was agreed that after Items 1 to 3, CD would address the meeting to give context to Items 7 and 10 and these items would be taken before returning to Item 4.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 October 2021</b></p> <p><b>a. Accuracy</b> – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following corrections:</p> <p><i>Page 1 – AS is head teacher of Beacon High, not Beacon Heights</i>  <i>FM – correct spelling of surname is MacCorquodale and she is head teacher of Prior Weston <b>and</b> Children’s Centre</i>  <i>To correct school to Arts and Media School Islington</i>  <i>Page 4 – Item 4 – in relation to EY underspend, ‘TP mentioned the turbulence that came from the extension of the 15 hours (not yours)...’</i>  <i>Page 6 – Item 7 second para – ‘The responses....on schools, including having (not ‘have’) high numbers...’</i>  <i>Page 8 – Item 8 Collaboration Project. Mid page – to <b>bold</b> ‘with’ and ‘to’ - ...’the spirit of doing <b>with</b> no <b>to</b>...’ to make it clearer.</i>  <i>Penultimate line – ‘...funding difficulties would <b>be</b> the ones...’</i></p> <p><b>b. Matters Arising</b> – there were no matters arising.</p> <p><b>AGREED</b></p>	
3.	<p><b>Schools forum composition</b></p> <p>The clerk (JW) gave a short verbal report.</p> <p><b>3.1. Apportionment of places</b></p> <p>JW would bring a report to January Forum, by when the October Census 2021 would have been finalised, to check that the apportionment of places across phases and types of schools and academies was in line with the distribution of pupils. During that discussion in January, Forum may wish to consider looking at the issue of ensuring there is a representative from an Academy/Free-school Alternative Provision as set out in the <a href="#">DfE Operational and Good Practice Guide</a> (para 39, page 12).</p> <p><b>3.2. Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) representative.</b></p> <p>NS’s term of office had been due to end on 25 October 2021. Forum was informed he had agreed to undertake another term of office due to end on 25 October 2025.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	

7. **Central School Services Block (CSSB) Central Retention**

10. **School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant**

CD gave the wider policy context for these two items before officers spoke to reports that had previously been circulated.

The reduction in funding that local authorities (LAs) can retain through the CSSB was happening (Item 7). The amounts of money involved would not lead to the collapse of education functions. But it is taking place against the context of the Coalition Government and now the current Government wishing to reduce the role of LAs. This is evidenced by changes to the way LAs are funded, the academisation agenda and the gradual introduction of a hard national funding formula reducing elements that Schools Forum controls and LAs retain.

There will be a White Paper on Schools in the New Year, setting new challenges for schools and LAs.

The current consultation on the School Improvement Monitoring Grant (Item 10) proposing to move this school improvement grant funding for LAs into de-delegated funding to be agreed by Forum does not come with any additional funding into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – so schools would get less funding if the preventative part of SI funding is agreed to be de-delegated.

The LA wants strong relationships with schools and to work with them on educational strategy.

In relation to two other items, (9. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAMHS] and Speech and Language Therapy [SALT], and 13. School Organisation, CD explained that she had sent an email to ME and AML to explain that she had asked officers to hold off sending out papers for this Schools Forum. The School Organisation Board, comprising head teachers and governors, looks at the detail of School Organisation there. The Forum's role is to focus on Growth and Falling Rolls funding. In relation to producing a paper report on CAMHS/SALT, this was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the LA – CH will bring a paper to next Forum on the High Needs block which includes an element of funding for CAMHS and SALT. The wider issues relating to these two services are discussed at the SEND Board and sub groups as is appropriate given Health colleagues attend these but not Schools Forum.

**Item 7 - Central School Services Block (CSSB) Central Retention**

TP clarified that this was for information – no decisions to be made. Forum to note the overall reduction in funding. At January Forum, they will need to make spending decisions in relation to all schools.

The Government has been reducing this funding for the last two years. The funding of ongoing duties and historic costs is projected to decrease from £1.6m in 2021/22 to £965K in 2026/27, by when the historic costs funding is projected to be phased out. We will find out the actual allocation in December. The top slice for copyright by the DfE is likely to increase. The LA will need to work with schools in the next financial year to manage the services they use as funding reduces.

AML asked what is being done to quality assure the services as quality varies. AC replied that she had met with SC and CD about this and she will report back soon.

## NOTED

### Item 10 – School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant

This was an item to note. Depending on the outcome of the DfE consultation due to end on 26 November, there may need to be a rapid consultation of maintained schools about de-delegation of funds. SC spoke to a paper that had been circulated.

SC commented that the window for the DfE consultation (29 Oct to 26 Nov) was tight and coincided with our area SEND inspection. Responding to such consultations in future should be more coordinated and timely once the Education Strategy is established.

There are currently two strands of funding for the LA to be able to meet its statutory school improvement duties in relation to maintained schools:

- School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant – currently £253K – for the LA's core intervention activities
- De-delegated funding for additional improvement services – needs agreement of Forum for funding out of Schools Block – more early intervention and prevention (EI and P) work.

The DfE consultation proposes to reduce by 50% the grant element in 2022/23 and remove it entirely from 2023/24. The DfE's rationale is that few LAs exercise their statutory power to intervene and so the grant is not needed. LAs are actually taking an Early Intervention and Prevention approach which is more cost-effective and leads to less need for statutory intervention. Part 4 of the paper sets out illustrative ways of how the LA would deal with the situation if the grant is cut. The LA will come back to Forum if there is a need to work on implications and mitigating actions.

SC confirmed the LA will be making a very robust response and this can be circulated (*update after meeting – was posted up on Schools Forum part of Governor Hub on 7 December*).

CM was concerned about schools being required to engage in consultation before Christmas and at a time when they are counting every penny. SC commented that the time frame was national. If the proposals are supported, it will be critical that we look at this with schools. The LA would not be working on the assumption that schools would plug the gap, but on the basis that preventative funding is more efficient.

AML commented on the difficulty of representing their sector without a robust understanding of the quality of services. SC said that the timeline for consulting on the withdrawal of the SIMBG was set by the DfE and it had placed pressure on all LAS trying to respond robustly within a limited window. However, it would be necessary for there to be a wider consultation with schools about the implications for Islington should the funding be withdrawn and she suggested this was scheduled for in the new year. This consultation would include a review of the impact of the funding. Dates will be circulated shortly.

CM suggested getting a date in the diary now in case such a consultation is needed, to be proactive not reactive. SC agreed and dates will be set shortly for the new year for more developed conversations. JL suggested in responses to say that we wanted to secure the funding.

**Agreed after Forum:** A meeting will be held on Friday 7 January to provide an update and discuss proposals, should the DfE implement the changes. To note, in the absence of a formal response from DfE, the meeting will focus on quality assurance of existing funds and future

	<p>proposals. The meeting will be open to all Forum members representing the maintained schools sector. Details of the meeting can be viewed in the Meetings section.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Spending Review 21 (SR21) and updates to schools funding for 2022-23</b></p> <p>SW spoke to a report that had been circulated in advance. This item was for information.</p> <p>At high level, the SR21 looks good, but there is no detail as yet. The review confirms an additional £4.7 billion nationally by 2024-25 for the core schools budget, with an increase of £1,500 per pupil baseline compared to that in 2019-20. It is not clear how much of this will be for High Needs, nor are the impacts of National Insurance payments clarified.</p> <p>Guaranteeing teacher starting salaries of £30K does not help Islington as our current minimum salaries are higher than that – that is anyway within the £4.7bn.</p> <p>There will be £1.8bn Education Recovery funding over the next two academic years.</p> <p>In relation to capital funding, the first 100 schools (out of 500) to be rebuilt have been selected.</p> <p>There will be £2.6 billion of capital funding for new school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in England. The Government has promised that the long-awaited SEND review will be published for consultation in the first quarter of 2022-23.</p> <p>ME asked if the £1.8bn funding for children with SEND before summer was the same as the funding announced in SR21. SW did not know.</p> <p>AML asked if the SEND review would cover High Needs funding or all SEN funding – SW said it was mainly HN funding (over which AML commented Schools Forum has no decision-making powers).</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>DSG projected allocations (future year)</b></p> <p>DS spoke to a spreadsheet that had previously been circulated. This was an item for information at this stage. This set out the projected allocations to schools within the Schools Block for 2022-23. The LA would receive the final allocations in mid-December.</p> <p>The figures in the left-hand (yellow) column were based on October 2021 Census figures (yet to be finalised). The figures in the green column were illustrative as of July 2021 and based on 2020 Census figures. This shows the impact of the loss of 221 pupils on the Schools Block.</p> <p>The fall in pupil numbers will also impact on Central Schools Services Block.</p> <p>The High Needs was currently unchanged as the DfE have been giving additional funding outside the formula while we wait for the SEND review.</p> <p>Allocations for Early Years will be known in December, but it was announced on 25 November that there will be an increase in the hourly rates for the free offer for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Islington will find out in December if we will get increases for our rates, given we have been</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>

	<p>protected through disapplication of the funding rules. Good news is that the Maintained Nursery Schools' funding will continue at least during the period of this SR.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Growth / Falling Rolls proposals (future year)</b></p> <p>DS reported to a report previously circulated.</p> <p><i>TW left the meeting at 2.52pm</i></p> <p>Forum agreed in principle at the October meeting, following the consultation of schools, to continue to retain Growth and Falling Rolls funding. With the October Census figures, it is possible to see what the figures are likely to look like.</p> <p><b>Explicit Growth Funding</b>  The table in Section 1.10 sets out the maximum and estimated funding in relation to four schools. The maximum (£331,599) exceeds the previously agreed total of £300k. However, some schools had not met their previous year's Published Admissions Number (PAN). So the question is does the Forum want to fund schools in that position? If Forum does not do that, funding needed is currently estimated at £240K. Forum were welcome to express an opinion about Growth funding now, and to revisit next year.</p> <p>FM asked for clarification about the difference between explicit and implicit growth. Implicit growth relates to growing schools that have not yet filled all their cohort groups and the funding comes through the Funding Formula. Explicit growth relates to permanent expansions and to bulge or additional adhoc classes.</p> <p><b>Falling Rolls</b>  The local criteria were set out in section 2.5. Final figures will be brought to January Forum. The budget previously agreed was £400K.</p> <p>Using the current criteria, seven schools are eligible for the funding and the budget would be overspent by £109K – Option A (Appendix C).</p> <p>If Forum wishes to keep the budget at £400K, the formula will need to be changed.</p> <p>The proposed change (Option B) in Appendix D is that schools will receive protection for the fall in numbers above the 5% threshold, so the school will absorb the first 5%. The resulting projected underspend of £60K could be used for Growth.</p> <p>AB commented that the criterion under point 2.5, 'Local planning data shows the places will be required within the next 3-5 years', was not helpful as local planning data was inaccurate. AML said that the School Organisation Board is looking at that. FM commented that according to local planning data, no school was really eligible. At School Organisation Board meetings, it appeared that there was a surplus of places for 3 to 5 year olds, and there was funding for growth and for FR in the same planning area.</p> <p><i>VL left at 15.01.</i></p> <p>AML asked what management plans were in place for schools with surplus capacity of 50% - it was confirmed that a project group would be set up for such schools. DS added that schools</p>	<p>DS</p>

	<p>with school rolls from October Census figures below that in their ratified budgets, and schools projecting a deficit, were being invited to meetings with the LA.</p> <p>AML asked if any of the schools in Option B (Appendix D) are projecting a budget surplus. DS replied that two out of the five schools with a projected surplus did meet the criteria.</p> <p>FM felt that Option B would be a better route given some schools may have grade-changing Ofsted inspections over the coming months and so become eligible or cease to be.</p> <p>CM asked why there was such a difference in funding for Highbury Quadrant and New North Academy – DS explained that this was because we have to fund academies for a full year as their financial year is September to August, while maintained schools get five months.</p> <p>AML asked if Forum could agree to fund maintained schools for 12 months. SW explained that maintained schools only need the uplift for five months – April to August, because of the lagged funding approach.</p> <p>AML asked if the FR funding could be shown over two or perhaps four years to show how this works. DS said she would bring more information to the January Forum.</p> <p>AML asked if Forum could change local criteria to prevent schools with surpluses receiving FR funding. DS said Forum could look at this for the following year, but we have already consulted schools in relation to 2022-23.</p> <p>Decisions would be needed in January.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	<b>DS</b>
7.	<p><b>Central School Services Block - Central Retention</b></p> <p>Discussed after Item 3.</p>	<b>DS/CH</b>
8.	<p><b>De-delegated Services benchmarking</b></p> <p>Forum was being asked to note the outcomes of the S251 benchmarking on de-delegated items in 2019-20 within the Schools Block of the DSG. SW spoke to a report that had been circulated. The report showed how different London boroughs spent de-delegated funds (for maintained schools) – Islington spent the most on Contingency (£1.2m out of £1.582K). What services boroughs spent contingency funds on varied a great deal.</p> <p>SW did not know when the 2020-21 figures would be available. She would present a report once this data is available.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	<b>SW</b>
9.	<p><b>High Needs: SALT &amp; CAHMS</b></p> <p>As advised by CD above, a paper on SALT and CAMHS was to be presented by CH at the next forum. Forum has no decision-making powers in relation to High Needs funding but Forum is consulted on this spending.</p>	<b>CH</b>

	<p>JL commented that she had asked for a paper at last Forum on High Needs funding – she felt the premise for funding (use of IDACI factors/number of EHCPs) needed clarification and she and others had expressed the view that there was some inaccuracies in the paper last term.</p> <p>SC said she would chase CH up and share as appropriate.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	<p><b>SC</b></p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>School Improvement Monitoring &amp; Brokering Grant</b></p> <p>Discussed after Item 3 and Item 7.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Capital Sub Group feedback</b></p> <p>ME reported verbally.</p> <p>As part of the restructure of the council, Deirdre Vimpany was now leading for the LA on asset management – this had been explained in Schools Bulletin on 7 October.</p> <p>2020-21 works, for example on window repairs, had largely fallen into 2021-22 due to the pandemic, and there were currently difficulties with supply and pricing. New River College, the main large project, had been delayed, but contractors were now on site. Overall, unplanned items were using up the contingency funding so that there was only £75K left until the end of March 2022.</p> <p>Condition surveys have been commissioned – they last took place in 2018.</p> <p>Projects with matched funding which has to be spent within the year are also running into difficulties in relation to suppliers, with contractors projected to go on site in late January rather than October half-term.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p><b>Forum Forward Planning</b></p> <p>This was for information. DS will add the SALT/CAMHS report into the planner.</p>	<p><b>DS</b></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p><b>School Organisation – Strategic Overview</b></p> <p>As advised above by CD, she had advised AC not to present a paper at this Forum.</p> <p>This matter is sitting with the School Organisation Board which includes head teachers and governors. There was currently no update – schools and governors will be advised of updates. SC said that decisions about funding in relation to this project will come to Forum.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	



<p>14.</p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>1. Holiday Pay &amp; TTO</p> <p>JL had raised this at the last Forum meeting – and she asked if the matter of possible under payments to support staff during holiday periods had been clarified. AC replied that she was working on this, and Forum will be advised once the LA has received legal advice.</p> <p>2. Collaboration Project</p> <p>SC advised that a Think Tank, rather than a shadow Education Board, had met and would continue to meet to discuss the vision and remit (terms of reference) of the forthcoming Education Board, including the connectivity between the Education Board and Schools Forum. In the current week, the Think Tank was looking at the terms of reference of a similar board in Hackney. The Board would begin meeting in the new year.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	<p><b>AC</b></p>
	<p><b>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</b> (virtual meetings on MS Teams unless otherwise indicated)</p> <p><b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b></p> <p>Thursday 20 January 2022, 2-4 pm  Thursday 19 May 2022, 2-4 pm  Thursday 14 July 2022, 2–4 pm (Face to Face – venue TBC)</p> <p><b>School Improvement Monitoring &amp; Brokering Grant update (adhoc meeting for maintained school representatives only)</b></p> <p>Monday 10 January 2022, –3.30 - 5 pm</p> <p><b>CHAIRS SUBGROUP</b></p> <p>Thursday 13 January, 2 – 3.30 pm  Thursday 12 May, 2 – 3.30 pm  Thursday 7 July, 2 – 3.30 pm</p> <p><b>EARLY YEARS SUBGROUP</b></p> <p>Tuesday 11 January, 2 - 4 pm  Friday 6 May, 1 – 3 pm</p> <p><b>CAPITAL SUB GROUP</b></p> <p>Thursday 24 February – 12.30 – 2 pm  Thursday 12 May – 12.30 – 2pm</p> <p><b>HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP</b></p> <p>Monday 7 March – 11 am – 1 pm  Monday 16 May – 11am – 1pm</p>	

DRAFT