

# Islington Schools Forum

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

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2022 at 2pm – held virtually (MS Teams).

## Attendees

### Present

- Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L); Head teacher, Newington Green Primary School (Chair)
- Alan Streater (AS); Head teacher, Beacon High Secondary School (Islington Futures Federation)
- Patrick Mildren (PM); Head teacher, Canonbury Primary School
- Ana Sevilla (ASe); Executive Head, New River Green and Packington Children's Centres
- Anita Grant (AG); CEO, Islington Play Association
- 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
- 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)
- 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)
- Francis Gonzalez (FrG); Head teacher, Richard Cloudesley Special School
- Vicky Linsley (VL); teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy
- Andrew Bosi (AB); Governor, Rotherfield Primary School
- Cllr Angelo Weekes (AW); Non-executive LA representative

### Other attendees

- Sarah Callaghan (SC); Director of Learning and Culture
- Tim Partington (TP); Head of Children's Services, Finance
- Debbie Stevenson (DS); Head of Early Years and Schools Funding
- Alison Cramer (AC) Assistant Director, School Support and Information Services
- Susan Woodland (SW); Interim Finance Manager (LBI)
- Jane Wright (JW); Manager Schools and EY Governance (Clerk)

## Apologies

- Jenny Lewis (JL); Head teacher, Thornhill Primary School
- Candy Holder (CH); Head of Pupil Services
- Cate Duffy (CD); Interim Corporate Director People

## Not in attendance

- Sally Franklin (SF); Head teacher, North Islington Nursery and Children's Centre
- Nigel Smith (NS); Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
- Joe Simpson (JS); Governor, St Peter and St Paul Primary

## Meeting minutes

No.	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.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 July 2021</b></p> <p><b>a. Accuracy</b> – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting,</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) spoke to a short report that had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>3.1. Apportionment of places of Forum in line with apportionment of pupils</b></p> <p>The final report on the apportionment of pupils across phases and type of school/academy indicated that there was no need to change the number of Schools Group members by type of setting with the current structure.</p> <p><b>3.2. Update on vacancies</b></p> <p>A vacancy for non-executive member (local authority) had just been filled – Cllr Angelo Weekes' term of office was 14 January 2022 until 13 January 2026.</p> <p><b>3.3. Structure of Forum</b></p> <p>DfE good practice guidance states that academy/free school members must represent mainstream academies and, if there are any in the local authority</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>

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	<p>area, special academies and <b>alternative provision (AP) academies</b>. Given there are now two AP free schools, it was recommended that a 23<sup>rd</sup> member be added to the membership of Islington Schools Forum. The clerk would contact these two settings and ask them to appoint a representative.</p> <p><b>Noted and agreed</b></p>	
4.	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget Monitoring (2021-22)</b></p> <p>TP spoke to a report that had been circulated in advance – this item was for queries and noting.</p> <p>The overall forecast underspend across all spending blocks had increased since the last Schools Forum by £0.169m to £5.982m. This included a net underspend of £88K against the Falling Rolls/Growth spending within the Schools Block (see Item 8 for more details).</p> <p>The Early Years (EY) contingency had risen a little to £2.093m because the in-year funding reduction from the DfE due to a reduced headcount was lower than had been anticipated.</p> <p>CM asked what criteria would be used in relation to the EY and High Needs underspends, given the current strain on schools.</p> <p>TP replied that these were LA decisions, but with input from Schools Forum in the relevant subgroups such as the HN group. Work was underway with Candy Holder in relation to HN.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Budget (DSG) Settlement (2022-23)</b></p> <p>DS spoke to a report that had been circulated in advance – this item was for information.</p> <p>The LA had been informed of the settlement in relation to the Schools and High Needs Blocks on 16 December 2021.</p> <p>There was some information about Early Years – the full picture for 2022-23 will not be known until the census in January 2023.</p> <p>Despite the overall decrease in pupil numbers (-311 primary; +79 secondary), there will be a net increase in Schools Block of £2.7m – the last year in the three-year funding settlement that started in 2019.</p> <p>Given the continuing delay to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Green Paper, the DfE has again announced funding for this area – Islington is due to receive £3.030m.</p> <p>In addition, there will be a new grant outside of the DSG to cover the forthcoming increases in costs to schools such as the Government's</p>	DS

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	<p>planned rise in National Insurance Contributions and energy price increases. Islington will receive about £4m plus about £1.5m for HNs settings.</p> <p>The final High Needs Block of DSG will be confirmed in March.</p> <p>AML commented that it was helpful to have the percentages of changes and proportions of funding included in the report – helped to contextualise the figures.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
6.	<p><b>School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant</b></p> <p>SC gave a verbal update.</p> <p>Following the Government consultation in late autumn, the DfE had analysed the responses and confirmed that this grant will be reduced by 50% in April 2022 and ended completely in April 2023. The LA is committed to funding the 50% gap in 2022-23 to ensure continuity of services. Then discussion can take place at the new Education Board, in line with discussions about Education priorities/strategy, to see whether these or other interventions supporting the agreed priorities will be funded in the longer term.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	
7.	<p><b>School Funding Formula (2022-23)</b></p> <p>DS spoke to a report that had been circulated in advance – this item was for decisions in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. allocation of headroom (surplus funding to schools)</li> <li>2. values for Growth and Falling Rolls funding</li> <li>3. 2022-23 formula factors and values</li> </ol> <p>disapplication for Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) exemption.</p> <p>1. After funds are allocated through the National Funding Formula (NFF), there will be a surplus of £237K (headroom) that will need to be allocated to schools. This, in part, relates to changes in the payment process of NNDR (business rates) from 2022-23.</p> <p>To allocate this funding, we will have to deviate from the NFF. The options are to give schools a lump sum, or the recommended approach is to increase the base rate per pupil. This will be a minor deviation from the NFF.</p> <p>Two votes were conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in favour of the lump sum option (Option 1) –</li> </ul> <p><b>0 votes</b></p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in favour of increasing base rate (Option 2) – <b>9 votes in favour; 3 abstentions</b></li> </ul> <p><b>It was agreed to increase the base rate</b></p> <p>2. Forum had agreed in principle at the last Forum to retain the values for Growth and Falling Rolls; £300k and £400k respectively. Forum were now asked to ratify the rates.</p> <p><b>Agreed unanimously</b></p> <p>3. Agree 2022-23 formula factors and values.</p> <p>This was agreed as point 2 above had been agreed.</p> <p><b>Agreed unanimously</b></p> <p>4. Disapplication for Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) exemption</p> <p>AB commented that the RPI used was two months' out of date. DS replied that that was the latest information available at the time of calculating for the ESFA (agreed formula due with them on 21 January). The actual charges to schools will be based on February 2022 information in line with the individual school's BSF Governing Body Agreement.</p> <p><b>Agreed unanimously</b></p>	
8.	<p><b>2022-23 Growth / Falling Rolls Funding</b></p> <p>DS spoke to a report previously circulated.</p> <p>Forum had agreed to the Growth funding at the November 2021 meeting, but had asked for further clarification of Falling Rolls funding.</p> <p>To remain within budget, an additional layer of criteria had been added for FR funding in that the school would cover the first 5% of movement.</p> <p>There had also been some questions about the apparent difference in funding for academies as opposed to maintained schools. SW explained that it was a matter of timing of funding, not different amounts, given academies are funded September to end August, while maintained schools are funded in line with the financial year. So if an academy has a bulge class from April, it will receive 12 months' funding in September of that year. Whereas a maintained school will receive funding earlier, in that April.</p> <p>In relation to FR, AM-L commented that it had been agreed fairly recently that schools would get a maximum of three years' funding. She asked if there was any rule about the gap of time before a school could apply again. She noted on Appendix B that one school had been funded for five years in total.</p>	

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	<p>DS replied that at the July 2022 Forum meeting, there would be discussion about new proposals for criteria/whether to fund in 2023/24. FM commented that schools receiving FR funding in the last three years are not getting funding in this current school year.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>8.i. Growth Funding – Schools’ Forum were asked to note previously agreed potential explicit growth funding allocations.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>8.2 Falling Rolls - Schools’ Forum were asked to note and agree funding allocations.</p> <p>Agreed unanimously</p> <p>DS spoke to a report previously circulated.</p> <p>Forum had agreed to the Growth funding at the November 2021 meeting, but had asked for further clarification of Falling Rolls funding.</p> <p>To remain within budget, an additional layer of criteria had been added for FR funding in that the school would cover the first 5% of movement.</p> <p>There had also been some questions about the apparent difference in funding for academies as opposed to maintained schools. SW explained that it was a matter of timing of funding, not different amounts, given academies are funded September to end August, while maintained schools are funded in line with the financial year. So if an academy has a bulge class from April, it will receive 12 months’ funding in September of that year. Whereas a maintained school will receive funding earlier, in that April.</p> <p>In relation to FR, AM-L commented that it had been agreed fairly recently that schools would get a maximum of three years’ funding. She asked if there was any rule about the gap of time before a school could apply again. She noted on Appendix B that one school had been funded for five years in total.</p> <p>DS replied that at the July 2022 Forum meeting, there would be discussion about new proposals for criteria/whether to fund in 2023/24. FM commented that schools receiving FR funding in the last three years are not getting funding in this current school year.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>8.i. Growth Funding – Schools’ Forum were asked to note previously agreed potential explicit growth funding allocations.</p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>	

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	<p>8.2 Falling Rolls - Schools' Forum were asked to note and agree funding allocations.</p> <p><b>Agreed unanimously</b></p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>School Central Retention (2022-23)</b></p> <p>TP spoke to a report that had previously been circulated. Forum were asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agree the proposed central retention in the CSSB</li> <li>b) Note the proposed change to central retention in the High Needs block</li> <li>c) Agree the proposed central retention in the Early Years Block</li> <li>d) Note resultant DSG budget in Appendix A</li> </ul> <p>The funding envelope for central schools services to which all schools and academies have access was being reduced by £124K. This funding is being reduced each year by 20% until it is fully phased out. The cost of centrally retained services is £1.425m against an allocation of £1.478m, leaving an unallocated balance of £53k. This balance can be held to smooth in any further funding reductions against the CSSB in 2023/24 and as a contingency for demand led items – it will be added to the balance from previous years of £199k.</p> <p>The plan is to look at all services the LA provides during 2022-23, including those funded through central retention, as part of the Education Strategy.</p> <p>TW queried why there was reference to an SLA for Legal Services. TP replied that the first level of support from Legal Services was available free to all schools and academies and funded through centrally retained funding. But further levels of support were available through an SLA. TP agreed to circulate what that first level entailed.</p> <p>And VL asked for it be spelt out to what other services her academy should have access.</p> <p>SS queried the Schools HR and Payroll item. TP and AC explained that it had been agreed through the November 2021 funding consultation to de-delegate a small amount for specified HR services such as model pay policies for all schools. As Schools HR and Payroll are now separate services, TP clarified the de-delegated item here should be HR only. Again more information would be circulated.</p> <p>AM-L asked for improved information about centrally retained services over the year, including KPIs and feedback from schools about the quality of the services, plus Benchmarking against other LAs. Also it would be useful to know how central retention has changed over time. AM-L invited members of Schools Forum to contact her with feedback.</p>	<p><b>TP/AC</b></p> <p><b>TP/AC</b></p> <p><b>Schools members</b></p>

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	<p>CM asked if any of the services were statutory. The reply was yes, some are statutory.</p> <p>In relation to the <b>first recommendation - agreeing the proposed central retention in the CSSB</b> the vote was:</p> <p>14 in favour; 1 not in favour, <b>Agreed</b></p> <p>In relation to the <b>second recommendation - noting the proposed change to central retention in the High Needs</b> block – <b>Noted</b></p> <p>In relation to EY funding, it is proposed to continue to retain funding in line with the 5% cap in 2022/23, which is the equivalent of £899k, a reduction of £80k (8%) from 2021/22. Some of the reduction in funding (£23K) can be managed by meeting the full cost of SALT and CAMHS from the High Needs Block, and we will manage the remaining reduction of £57k within the EYFS Team and Strategy and Management service without impacting services in 2022-23.</p> <p>AM-L acknowledged that while Forum cannot make decisions about HN funding, there was some concern about the SALT and CAMHS services and Forum was awaiting a paper that Cate Duffy had agreed could come to Forum on this. DS replied that Forum is still consulted on areas of funding for which it cannot make decisions (eg through HN subgroup), and there would be a paper on SALT and CAHMS at the May 2022 Forum meeting.</p> <p>SC added that Education Board will be an opportunity for schools to be consulted.</p> <p>In relation to the <b>third recommendation - agreeing the proposed retention of Early Years funding</b>, it was <b>agreed unanimously</b>.</p> <p>In relation to the <b>fourth recommendation</b> to note the resultant DSG budget in Appendix A - <b>Noted</b></p>	<b>CH</b>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Early Years Sub Group update</b></p> <p>AG, the chair of the group, gave a verbal update. The last meeting on 11 January considered the EY Consultation document as no results were yet available (consultation under way). The group agreed to the proposals in the consultation document.</p> <p>The group suggested further consultation of settings to establish whether attendance was returning to pre-pandemic levels and attendance patterns. It had been difficult to respond to the consultation as it went out so later. The subgroup messaged EY colleagues so there was some dialogue at the subgroup meeting.</p>	



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	There was a plea to ensure the EY sector is involved in discussions about additional funding for SEN (CH's work).	
11.	<p><b>Early Years Funding Formula (2022-23)</b> (Cllr AW arrived at the meeting at 3.08pm during discussion of this item.)</p> <p>DS spoke to a report previously circulated. This item was for decisions.</p> <p>DS thanked AG for taking the chair of the EY subgroup, for responding to the consultation and encouraging other providers to do so. The consultation could not have gone out any earlier due to when information was released by the DfE on the funding settlement and the operational guidance.</p> <p>While the DfE was not increasing the rate for 3 and 4 year olds (£7.81), the LA was proposing to, and most respondents agreed with this. There will be an increase in DfE funding in 2022-23 in the 2 year old rate; £0.21p to £6.87.</p> <p>Forum was asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue with the SEN Inclusion Fund at the level stated in the consultation; £1,289k</li> <li>2. To proceed with the disapplication process to the DfE to maintain the current 2 year old funding rate.</li> <li>3. 3 &amp; 4 yr old EYNFF – to maintain existing supplementary factors across all types of provider</li> <li>4. 3 &amp; 4 yr old EYNFF - To continue to use EYPP as the measure of deprivation</li> <li>5. 2 yr old EYNFF - To continue to use the quality factor</li> <li>6. 2 yr old EYNFF - To continue to use the small setting factor for childminders</li> <li>7. 2 yr old EYNFF - To protect the 2 year old hourly rate for 2022-23</li> </ol> <p><b>Agreed</b></p>	
12.	<p><b>Forward Planning</b></p> <p>AM-L welcomed Cllr Angelo Weekes to the meeting.</p> <p>Forum <b>noted</b> the forward planning paper.</p>	
13.	<p><b>AOB and close</b></p> <p>Holiday Pay &amp; TTO – AC reported verbally that legal advice had yet to be issued.</p> <p>AM-L thanked all for their preparation for and participation in the meeting. She noted that the Governor Hub account was working well, having all papers in one place.</p>	<b>DS</b>

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	The meeting closed at 3.20pm	
	<p><b>Dates of next meetings</b> (virtual meetings on MS Teams unless otherwise indicated)</p> <p><b>Schools Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 19 May 2022, 2 to 4 pm</li> <li>• Thursday 14 July 2022, 2 to 4 pm (Face to Face, venue TBC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Chairs Sub Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 12 May, 2 to 3.30 pm</li> <li>• Thursday 7 July, 2 to 3.30 pm</li> </ul> <p><b>Early Years Sub Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday 6 May, 1 to 3 pm</li> </ul> <p><b>Capital Sub Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 24 February, 12.30 to 2 pm</li> <li>• Thursday 12 May, 12.30 to 2 pm</li> </ul> <p><b>High Needs Sub Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 7 March - 11 am to 1 pm</li> <li>• Monday 16 May - 11 am to 1 pm</li> </ul>	