



Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Directorate

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BARNSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 19th MARCH 2024

PRESENT

Headteacher and Board Representatives

Paul Crook, Victoria Harrison, Jonny Mitchell, Anna Rooney, Simon Tabbner and Joe Woffinden

Governor Representative(s)

Margaret Gostelow and Michael Sanderson

Nursery Provision Representative

Simon Sykes

Early Years Representative

Kathy Fletcher

Special and Alternative Provision Representatives

Molly Beever and Josh Greaves

Local Authority Representative

Councillor Janine Moyes

Officers

Nina Sleight

Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention)

Sue Day

Head of SEND and Inclusion, Barnsley MBC

Ashley Gray

Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC

Helen Perrin	Principal Accountant (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC
Anna Turner	Head of Education and Partnerships, Barnsley MBC
Shafeek Khan	Secretary to the Barnsley Schools Forum

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Formal apologies were submitted by Mrs Gorton and Mr Wilkinson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Representatives of the Forum declared their interest in relation to matters being considered particularly as part of agenda items 4-6 of today's meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 19th March 2024 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

No matters arose during consideration of these minutes.

5. REPORTS

High Needs Funding Budget (2024/25)

Mr Gray and Mrs Perrin presented their report on the funding arrangements concerning the High Needs Budget Block, together with the budget allocations for planned school place and the proposed rates for place and top-up funding across the sector during the next financial year. This included the proposed transfer of one per cent of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block which had been agreed by the Schools Forum, at its meeting held on 12th December and which had, since, been approved by the Department for Education.

Mrs Perrin commented upon the challenging backdrop characterised by rising demand and financial pressures facing schools. Mrs Perrin also outlined the steps to be taken to mitigate both the in-year and cumulative deficit in the High Needs Block, particularly through the DSG Management Plan and the SEND Safety Valve Participation Agreement between the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Schools Forum notes the High Needs funding settlement for the Borough during 2024/25, particularly the proposed funding requirements in relation to the number of commissioned specialist places and the payment of top- up funding to mainstream, special schools and academies, together with other providers and settings.**

Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 3: 2023/24)

Ms Sleight and Ms Day presented the latest quarterly SEND performance and finance report and commented on the following:

- The role and responsibilities of the Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership in overseeing the Local Area Inclusion Plan.
- Following the outcome of the last SEND inspection, the progress made against the Written Statement of Action and the active preparations undertaken for the next SEND inspection.
- Performance against our local indicators reflected rising demand and was relatively stable compared to previous quarters. Among these, the number of education, health and care plans issued within the statutory twenty- week period remained better than the National Average.
- The Local Authority and statutory partners were either largely compliant or on track to meet many of the conditions of the SEND 'Safety Valve' Participation Agreement, during this period. Where improvement was necessary, action had been identified and instigated.
- The latest position concerning the budget for the High Needs Block, together with related budgets and the action being taken to mitigate and manage risks.

Ms Sleight added that the first in a series of annual SEND conversations had taken place between Barnsley MBC and the inspectorates in which the Local Authority had successfully demonstrated evidence of its capability in achieving the objectives and priorities of the Local Area Inclusion Plan.

Discussion emerged over the moral imperative of ensuring vulnerable children had their education needs met within schools and settings and did not miss out. In response, Ms Day referred to the action being taken to address the experience of children who were either not participating in education or in reduced provision, particularly as a result of exclusion, particularly via the work of the Green Panel.

RESOLVED:

- **The Schools Forum notes the latest, published quarterly SEND Performance and Finance report.**

Extended Early Years Entitlements and Development of 'Wraparound' Provision

Following the announcement made as part of last year's Spring Budget, Ms Sleight and Mrs Fletcher presented a report on the proposed expansion of early years entitlements, in Barnsley, for families with children aged two, followed by children aged nine months, during 2024/25.

Mrs Fletcher detailed the measures being undertaken to help shape the market, including 'wraparound' provision, aimed at ensuring the sufficiency and equity of provision across the Borough and meet demand. On this, Mrs Fletcher urged schools and settings to respond to the Local Authority's Wraparound Survey. Ms Sleight commented upon the importance of the proposals, not only in enabling young children to obtain a good start but also in helping working families and

supporting workless households in entering the jobs market. Ms Turner added that the expansion of early years entitlements should be seen within the context of improving education outcomes and enrichment at all stages of the National Curriculum, through other developments such as breakfast and after-school provision.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Schools Forum notes the report concerning the expansion of early years entitlements, including the steps being taken to help shape the local market and ensure the sufficiency and equity of provision across the Borough.**

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR DECISION

No reports were submitted for the Forum's decision at today's briefing.

RESOLVED:

- **No further action.**

7. CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS

No confidential reports were submitted for consideration at today's briefing.

RESOLVED:

- **No further action.**

8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair of the Schools Forum paid tribute to Mrs Beever who was attending her final meeting as a member.

RESOLVED:

- **That members appreciation and gratitude be extended to Mrs Beever for her long service and contribution to the work of the Schools Forum, together with a long and happy retirement.**

The Chair of the Forum also thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at today's meeting..

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(Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)