

***Bristol Schools Forum***

Agenda Tuesday, 23rd May, 2023 at 5.00 pm

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

	<b>Start</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Paper</b>
1.	17:00	Welcome	A	Chair	
2.	17:05	Forum Standing Business (a) Apologies for Absence (b) Confirmation meeting is quorate (c) Appointment of new members/Resignations: (d) Notification of Vacancies: (e) Declarations of Interest	A	Clerk	
3.	17:10	Minutes of the Previous Meeting (a) To confirm as a correct record  (b) Matters arising not covered on agenda	A	Chair	2 - 6
4.	17:15	Update from Director of Education And Skills	I	RBW	
5.	17:40	DSG Budget Monitor and Financial Outturn for Year 2022/23	I	AL	7 - 12
6.	18:10	School Sufficiency	I	RBW	13 - 18
7.	18:40	Any Other Business (As agreed by the Chair)	I	Chair	

(\*) A = Admin, I = Information, De = Decision required, C = Consultation, Di = Discussion

**Clerk:** Claudette Campbell email: [claudette.campbell@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:claudette.campbell@bristol.gov.uk)**Chair:** (contact via clerk)**FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Next School Year</b>
12 July 2023 – Wednesday	26 September 2023
	28 November 2023
	January tbc
	26 March 2024
	21 May 2024
	9 July 2024

## *Bristol Schools Forum*

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28th March, 2023**  
**at 5.00 pm at Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Present:**

Melanie Bunce	St Barnabas
Mandy Cheshire	St Bede's Catholic College
Simon Eakins	Cathedral Primary
Tonya Hill	New Fosseyway School
Simon Holmes	St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Sarah Lovell	Bristol Brunel Academy
Kate Matheson	St Barnabas Primary School
Aileen Morrison	St Matthias Park
Chris Pring	Whitehall Primary School
Cameron Shaw	Bristol Metropolitan Academy
Stephanie Williams	Bannerman Road Community Academy
Jo Willis	Bristol Diocese Board of Education

**In attendance from Bristol City Council:**

Abi Gbago	Executive Director: Children and Education
Reena Bhogal-Welsh	Director of Education and Skills
Angel Lai (AL)	Finance Manager (Children and Education)
Samantha Wilcock (SW)	Clerk to Schools Forum

	Action
<b>1. Welcome</b>	
SL welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
<b>2. Forum Standing Business</b>	
<p><b>a. Apologies for absence</b>                      Apologies for absence were received from:                          Cedric Sanguinol, Primary Governor                          Rebecca Watkin, LearnMAT                          Jo Willis, Bristol Diocese Board of Education                          Aderyn Zajicova, Nursery Governor</p> <p><b>b. Quorate</b>                      The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p> <p><b>c. Resignations</b>                      It was noted that Mick O'Neil Duff and Richard Penska had resigned from the forum.</p> <p><b>d. Appointment of New Members</b>                      It was noted that Steve Hornsby joins the Forum as the new PRU Governor Rep and Tonya Hill joins as Special Maintained Representative.</p> <p><b>e. Notification of Vacancies</b>                      The following vacancies were noted:</p>	

<p>1 Secondary Academy Governor Representative. 1 Primary Academy Governor Representative</p> <p><b>f. Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p><b>3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED</b> – that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>The actions listed in the minutes had been covered within the items on the agenda</p>	
<p><b>4. Introduction and update from Director of Education and Skills</b></p>	
<p>Reena Bhogal-Welsh was introduced to the Forum as the new interim Director for Education &amp; Skills and welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>RBW gave a verbal presentation regarding <u>Family Hubs</u>. Physical hubs had been located in three different areas of the City with one of the hubs up and running with visitors. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.</p>	RBW
<p><b>5. DSG Budget Monitor Update</b></p>	
<p>AL presented the report for information which outlined the forecast financial position for the DSG overall as at Period 10 (P10 to end of January 2023 extrapolated).</p> <p>In response to the report the following themes were discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At the end of last year, the Maintained Schools forecast had shown a surplus position of over £4.4m which was now a forecast deficit of £3.1m. Officers were aware of the pressures faced by schools and nurseries within the current financial climate in terms of inflation and utility costs as well as falling primary numbers of pupils on roll.</li> <li>2. It was suggested that a contributing factor to the £2.5m increase in the maintained Primary Schools deficit had been the removal of schools with surplus balances from the end of year position when they switched to Academy status. Although, it was also highlighted that those schools would also remove their incremental costs.</li> <li>3. The draft mitigation plan for the High Needs Block would be released for consultation with the sector and wider public before consideration by the Bristol City Council Cabinet for decision.</li> <li>4. It was positive news that the mainstream schools additional grant for 2023/24 had been confirmed which would become part of the baseline funding going forward for primary and secondary schools. However, the Nurseries funding formula rates were still behind the market rates, and it was hoped there would be future changes to the formula as announced by Government (currently not reflected within the report).</li> <li>5. The significant proportion of 85% of schools now an in-year deficit which was of high concern. Although extra funding had been announced, costs continued to rise. It was important to keep the support in place to help advise and assist schools going forward. <b>Action: AL to provide further information regarding the proportion of schools with an in-year deficit forecast that also had a cumulative deficit.</b></li> <li>6. With reference to sufficiency planning in the longer term as the population changes evident within primary schools moved through the system, AG highlighted an organisation that supported the Sheffield Schools Forum who could assist Bristol Schools Forum with proactive work in this area. <b>ACTION: Officers to arrange contact.</b></li> </ol>	<p>AL</p> <p>RBW</p>

<p>7. It was unclear how the Government announcement regarding increased nursery places for 2 year olds would impact on current workstreams. Under the proposals, by 2025/26 there would need to be double the number of places being offered at a time where settings were at risk of closing. Strategic direction was requested around funding and support for the strategic role of nurseries in Bristol in terms of early intervention and also as part of Family Hubs.</p> <p>8. With primary schools sliding into deficit this year, it was requested that the carried forward resource for 'schools in financial difficulty' be accessed. Officers were asked to revisit the reasons for the original agreement to ensure consideration of the remit before any alternative use for the money was considered. <b>Action: Officers to confirm back to the BSF.</b></p> <p><b>It was AGREED that the in-year 2022/23 position for the overall DSG was noted.</b></p>	AL
<b>6. Maintained Nursery Schools Transformation Programme</b>	
<p>RBW introduced the report which provided the Forum with an update on the progress of the maintained Nursery School transformation programme following the de-delegation of £90k from the 2021-22 Early Years underspend in July 2022. The report outlined the spend to date, an overview of progress with the programme and its impact.</p> <p>In response to the report the following themes were discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To date, £123,000 (out of £340,000) of the Early Year's SEND / Nursery Improvement funding is forecast to be spent at the end of the financial year. The remaining balance should continue to be ring-fenced for this purpose to allow the continuation of work with nursery schools and Early Years SEND improvement. Information within the report which was indicative would be further updated at a future meeting.</li> <li>1. With reference to SEND, colleagues and partners endeavoured to work cross directorate and disciplines of education, health and children's social care work holistically in order to ensure the biggest impact.</li> <li>2. AL confirmed that the submitted schools recovery plans would be finalised by the end of March. Officers planned to establish a high level financial impact assessment evaluated in light of changing government announcements. It was noted that following the year-end for schools in mid April a formal response would be released by the end of April.</li> <li>3. Officers confirmed that support given by way of advice and officer support during the process would continue to be given as far as possible.</li> <li>4. Through the evaluation of the schools recovery plans, the team were looking to identify operating models and examples of best practice that could be cascaded more widely. Examples of effective financial improvements had been noted to share for training purposes.</li> <li>5. It was agreed that the item would remain on the agenda for the next meeting including an update of clarity around the remainder of the £250k spend. <b>ACTION: Officers to add to the work programme and note for report planning</b></li> </ol> <p><b>It was AGREED that Schools Forum:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Noted the spend, activity and progress to date</b></li> <li>b) <b>Noted planned next steps</b></li> <li>c) <b>Noted that the funding of £340k includes £90k for Maintained Nursery Transformation</b></li> </ol>	Clerk RBW

## 7. High Needs Recovery Plan - Delivering Best Value

RBW updated the forum on Bristol's participation in the Department for Education (DfE)'s Delivering Better Value in SEND programme; the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan and overarching governance of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit management approaches.

In response to the report the following themes were discussed:

1. The Chair noted the helpful summary of the four different workstreams summarised in section 5 of the report. The report included helpful information (particularly the diagram on page 9) illustrating the different work streams and timeline. Officers were asked to consider building on that to ensure the information presented to the forum continued to use consistent language, format and accessibility. Alongside this, consideration would be given to provide the Forum with leading indicators to identify and track benefits.

**ACTION: Officers to consider consistent information presentation and leading indicators within reports going forward.**

2. It was highlighted that it would be important to improve recruitment and retention within the sector in order to implement the planned progress of SEND within mainstream settings. RBW confirmed that the local authority was actively looking at ways to improve recruitment and retention within schools in Bristol and in the context of the national picture. Mention in the report regarding limitations of inclusive practice resulting in a lower number of children with an EHCP within mainstream settings was not a comment about the quality of the existing workforce within schools.
3. The Workstream 1 pilot would involve a range of schools from across the City and draw upon directorate roles to establish best practice to roll out. The selection method would utilise the diagnostic work of the chosen organisation. More detail would be provided when scoping work had completed.
4. It was highlighted that schools were already under a lot of pressure due to the deficit forecast, pressures in terms of resources and also negotiations for pay increases the government propose are funded by schools. There was concern that proposals within the report appear to call for more work when resources were already stretched. AL confirmed that with the cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures being addressed by Government grants from 2023-24 intended to ease the financial pressure, the Local Authority needed to ensure a robust financial plan and associated due diligence work to ensure schools spend was sustainable. Rather than approaching the issue as reducing spending on the HN budget, it was a case of 'reframing' spend to consider whether placements could be offered locally for less cost resulting in more benefit for the same spend and a better experience for the children. The Schools Forum recognised the challenging financial times and that development was needed to ensure the sector could better support each other to meet the need for the children of Bristol.
5. There remained concern about the amount of time parents were waiting to see speech and language specialists or a paediatrician during a time where more children were coming to nursery and school with more need than in the past. It was of high concern the referrals system for children with autism had been suspended by Sirona meaning no route for evidence for access to top up funding and less support for staff on the front line. It would remain difficult to address the relationship BCC had with parents and children with SEND with the system not serving the parents and children entering the system. Officers reassured forum members that they would continue those conversations with the providers involved in those decisions.
6. Information was requested regarding the number of extra independent school places, where they were identified and what provision was possible. The need for additional Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision was also highlighted. **ACTION:**

RBW

RBW

<p><b>Officers to provide information for the next meeting.</b></p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> that the Schools Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the convergence of work and programmes concerned with mitigation of DSG High Needs Block deficit and these programmes co-exist and support the ongoing maintenance of DSG Management Plan<sub>1</sub>.</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the feedback from the High Needs Block Recovery Plan indicative mitigation proposals engagement and survey conducted during October and November 2022</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the consultation approach for progressing new proposals contained within the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan (being delivered through workstream 2 of the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme)</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted that the outcome of the consultation will be presented to Schools Forum in September 2023 seeking endorsement prior to Cabinet decision</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. Any Other Business (as agreed with the Chair)</b></p>	
<p>A query had been received from a Forum member that had not been able to attend. It asked about the financial pathway for top up funding where the pupils no longer on roll and how that funding was repaid. The query would be sent to officers for reply. <b>ACTION: AL to be sent the specific query for consideration and reply.</b></p>	AL

The meeting closed at 6.40pm

**Bristol Schools Forum**  
**DSG 2022/23 Outturn report as at March 2023 (Period 12 / P12)**

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	23 May 2023
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	5.00 pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Zoom Meeting
<b>Report Author:</b>	Angel Lai

## **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This report provides information of the 2022/23 DSG end of year outturn position as at Period 12 (P12) to end of March 2023.

## **2 Recommendation**

### **2.1 Schools Forum is invited to:**

- a) **note the end of year 2022/23 outturn position for DSG.**

## **3 2022/23 DSG outturn position**

The DSG ended the 2022/23 financial year with an in-year deficit of £15.031m or a cumulative deficit of £39.681m including £24.650m deficit brought forward from the previous years. This is £2.222m improvement from P10 forecast position, mainly driven by £0.802m underspend in Early Years Block made up of £0.658m funding clawback adjustment based on January 2023 census return data plus £0.267m underspend from EY / MNS Improvement Programmes and £1.135m High Needs top up contingency fund released at year end to reflect actual spend at the end of March 2023 per ESFA DSG guidance note. However, this is included within DSG management plan (5 year forecast) to reflect potential liability going forward until the backlog is cleared.

DSG end of year outturn position is set out in **Table 1** with more detail set out in **Appendix 1**.

Table 1: 2022/23 DSG outturn position

2022-23 DSG outturn position (All figures £'000)	Balance brought forward 01.04.2022	Transfers	Revised balance brought forward	DSG funding 2022/23*	2022/23 outturn	In-year variance	2022/23 outturn carry forward	Movement since P10
Schools Block	(1,517)	1,517	0	304,661	303,874	(787)	(787)	(230)
De-delegation	(504)		(504)	0	(23)	(23)	(527)	(23)
Schools Central Services Block	8		8	2,742	2,742	0	8	0
Early Years Block	(472)		(472)	35,329	35,196	(133)	(605)	(802)
High Needs Block	27,876	(1,517)	26,358	78,466	94,629	16,162	42,520	(1,135)
Education Transformation	(740)		(740)	1,531	1,343	(188)	(928)	(33)
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,650</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24,650</b>	<b>422,730</b>	<b>437,761</b>	<b>15,031</b>	<b>39,681</b>	<b>(2,222)</b>

\*Note: DSG allocation is indicative as Early Year's funding allocation is based on actual participation and is updated quarterly in arrears.

- 3.1 **Schools Block (£0.787m underspend).** All of the formula funding for maintained mainstream schools and academies has been allocated. Scope for variation is in the growth fund, where actual end of year spent was £2.063m, or £0.787m underspend from £2.889m budgeted spend (based on October 2022 Census return).

### 3.1.1 LA Maintained Schools end of year deficit position

2022/23 was proven to be challenging for the sector and the financial health of LA maintained schools deteriorated by £5.279m during the year and ended the financial year with £1.765m cumulative deficit. Although this position is £1.373m favourable compared to Schools' Q2 forecast position (reported to the Forum in March 2023), the scale of in-year deficit of (£1.858m in 2022/23) in Maintained Nursery schools (MNS) is envisaged having significant impact to overall financial health of LA Maintained Schools going forward and as such unspent EY / MNS improvement fund (£0.267m) will be ring-fenced to support EY transformation journey going forward; and when surplus is available and subject to formal consultation, the Forum is advised to support DSG funding to be optimised to support the ongoing sustainable delivery of MNS service in the City.

End of year LA maintained schools' financial position is summarised in Table 2 below which is NOT included within Schools' Block balance figure in Table 1.



2022/23 Bristol LA Maintained schools balances	2021/22 balance carry forward	2022/23 closing balance	In-year movement	No of schools in <u>cummulative deficit</u> position as at 31.3.2023
Children's Centres (CC)	£340,282	£541,332	£201,050	1 out of 1
Hub	-£773,226	-£498,219	£275,007	0 out of 4
Nursery	£5,192,472	£7,050,083	£1,857,612	11 out of 12
Primary	-£3,831,129	-£2,906,381	£924,748	4 out of 28
Primary with Nursery settings	-£1,714,572	-£737,175	£977,396	2 out of 12
Secondary	-£878,304	-£391,665	£486,639	0 out of 2
Special	-£1,297,550	-£789,395	£508,155	1 out of 5
Pru (Pupil Referral Unit)	-£552,232	-£503,945	£48,286	0 out of 1
<b>Sum total (+ve: deficit)</b>	<b>-£3,514,259</b>	<b>£1,764,635</b>	<b>£5,278,894</b>	<b>19 out of 65</b>
Sum excluding CC & Hubs	-3,081,315	1,721,522	4,802,837	18 out of 60

Key challenges are in Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) where 11 out of 12 LA maintained nursery schools were in deficit position, an Early Year's (EY) strategy will be pivotal to the long-term sustainability of EY service provision in the City. Additional £1.6m funding uplift in MNS supplement in 2023/24 was welcomed as this makes a good contribution towards 2023-24 financial sustainability but recovery plans will be required to address the accumulated historic deficits.

Primary and Secondary schools also experience financial challenges, initial analysis indicating that Primary and Secondary schools is anticipated to achieve balanced budget position with additional £10.749m MSAG (Bristol indicative allocation of Mainstream Schools' Additional Grant) in 2023-24.

- 3.2 **De-delegated resources (£0.023m underspend).** 2022-23 budget was fully spent, the in-year underspend was due to training income from academies.
- 3.3 **School Central Services Block (Nil Variance).** 2022-23 allocation £2.742m was fully spent.
- 3.4 **Early Years Block (£0.133m underspend).** Early Years income and expenditure is based on actual participation throughout the academic year. The end of year financial position is calculated based on January 2023 census data where £0.658m funding clawback is anticipated due to participation rate and could vary when actual income is confirmed in July 2023.

Early Years is experiencing significant pressure in emerging SEN which was overspend by £0.474m during the financial year, offset by potential underspend calculated based on January 2023 census data and £0.267m underspend in EY / MNS improvement programmes which should continue to be ringfenced to support EY transformation.

- 3.5 **High Needs Block (£16.162m overspend).** The High Needs block ended the financial year with an in-year overspend position of £16.162m (excluding £0.188m underspend in High Needs transformation programme), or a cumulative overspend position of £42.520m when adding cumulative brought forward deficit balance of £26.358m (after partially offset by £1.517m underspend transferred from the Schools' Block which was agreed with the Schools' Forum in May 2022 meeting).
- 3.6 Top-up funding remains the single greatest pressure, with a significant in year overspend of £9.932m in 2022/23 followed by £4.089m overspend in placements cost.
- 3.7 High Needs recovery plan proposals has been developed alongside the DSG Management Plan and Department for Education Delivering Better Value for SEND Programme (DfE DBV programme), latest forecast including potential benefits (subject to formal consultation) was reported to the Forum in March 2023 and is summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4 DSG MP: DSG forecast position	2022-23		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
	outturn						
Income / Surplus should be shown as negative	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast £'000
Brought forward unmitigated deficit	£24,650	£39,681	£60,735	£80,871	£98,579	£114,732	£114,732
Total expenditure	£437,761	£464,920	£476,529	£491,701	£506,736	£521,263	£521,263
Total Income <sup>1</sup>	-£422,730	-£443,867	-£448,277	-£463,967	-£480,206	-£497,013	-£497,013
<b>Funding gap carry forward to future years</b>	<b>£39,681</b>	<b>£60,735</b>	<b>£80,871</b>	<b>£98,579</b>	<b>£114,732</b>	<b>£128,242</b>	
Mitigation Proposals:							
Carried forward indicative proposals			-3,075	-12,040	-23,512	-36,086	
Annual Indicative Proposed Mitigations	0	-3,075	-8,965	-11,472	-12,574	-12,574	
<b>Funding gap after proposed mitigations</b>	<b>£39,681</b>	<b>£57,660</b>	<b>£68,831</b>	<b>£75,067</b>	<b>£78,646</b>	<b>£79,582</b>	
DBV stretched confidence benefits - cumulative	£0	-£3,180	-£13,180	-£29,880	-£52,980	-£80,380	
DBV stretched confidence benefits - annual	£0	-£3,180	-£10,000	-£16,700	-£23,100	-£27,400	
<b>Funding gap after DBV stretched benefits</b>	<b>£39,681</b>	<b>£57,555</b>	<b>£67,691</b>	<b>£68,699</b>	<b>£61,752</b>	<b>£47,862</b>	

Note <sup>1</sup> : income uplift of 3.5% I assumed post 2023-24 per ESFA guideline.

Based on latest forecast (as at January 2023), it is estimated that High Needs Block could achieve a balanced budget position in 2025-26 if DBV stretched confidence benefits materialise, which is subject to formal consultation. Further updates on DBV programme is covered in Education Director's updates.

**The Belonging with SEND Programme** (was known as Education Transformation Programme), primarily concerned with SEN and consequently the High Needs Block, a separate report was available in January 2023 Schools Forum paper (Agenda Item 8, link: [Jan23 SF DBV update](#)). Nationally High Needs continues to be challenging and in Bristol this has been exacerbated by work to clear the backlog of EHCP.

**3.8 Funding (Nil Variance).** £422.730m (£423.388m less EY clawback of £0.658m) including Early Year's adjustment calculated based on January 2023 census data.

In summary the DSG ended the financial year with an in-year deficit of £15.031m against annual funding of £422.730m (£423.388m less EY clawback of £0.658m). The £15.031m in-year deficit will be transferred to DSG ringfenced deficit reserve. This is equivalent to a cumulative carry forward deficit reserve balance of £39.681m when including £24.650m deficit balance brought forward from previous years.

As statutory overwrite has been extended by DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) for another three years to March 2026, this gives the LA more time to deliver DGS management plan and mitigations with the aim to bring DSG annual spend back to a sustainable footing. Bristol has secured £1.0m from DfE DBV programme (Delivering Better Value in SEND). Along with £1.6m transformation fund from 2023-24 Schools Block to High Needs approved by the Schools' Forum in January 2023, this gives a total of £2.6m to deliver DBV programmes and High Needs recovery plan, which is in addition to the £0.928m carry forward fund from Belong with SEND programme. This means there is a total of £3.528m for Bristol to devise a sustainable education system to meet the needs of Children and Young People in the city before March 2026 and prior to the full implementation of National Funding Formulae (NFF) where local flexibility will be removed. Consultation response of government's Implementing Direct National Funding Formulae is available [NFF consultation response](#) Further details on DBV programme updates and High Needs Recovery plan is included within Education Director's update.

## Appendix 1 - DSG 2022/23 outturn position as at March 2023

Bristol DSG Outturn position as at Period 12 (P12) 2022/23	Brought forward 1.4.22	Funding 2022/23	P12 Outturn position	In-year movement	Carry forward 31.3.23	P10 Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Maintained Schools		77,781	77,821	39		77,781
Academy Recoupment		223,990	223,990	0		223,990
Growth Fund		2,889	2,063	(826)		2,332
<b>Schools Block</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>304,661</b>	<b>303,874</b>	<b>(787)</b>	<b>(787)</b>	<b>304,104</b>
<b>De-delegation Services</b>	<b>(504)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(527)</b>	<b>0</b>
Admissions	6	529	529	0	6	558
Centrally Retained	1	2,213	2,213	0	1	2,185
<b>Schools Central Services</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,742</b>	<b>2,742</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,742</b>
National Formula		27,541	27,105	(436)		27,939
2 Year Old Funding		3,149	3,172	24		3,540
Pupil Premium (EYPP)		370	317	(54)		328
Additional Support Services		500	457	(43)		462
SEN Top up		1,600	2,074	474		2,204
Staffing		2,029	1,892	(137)		2,018
Disability Access Fund		140	105	(35)		93
EY & Nursery improvement work			74	74		73
<b>Early Years Block</b>	<b>(472)</b>	<b>35,329</b>	<b>35,196</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>(605)</b>	<b>36,657</b>
Commissioned Services		2,612	3,422	810		3,465
Core Place Funding		9,307	9,102	(205)		9,180
Staffing		1,202	2,272	1,070		2,530
Top Up		38,679	48,610	9,932		52,357
Placements		10,396	14,485	4,089		11,583
Pupil Support		936	1,402	466		1,301
HOPE Virtual School		236	235	(0)		249
Academy Recoupment		15,099	15,099	0		15,099
Education Transformation		1,531	1,343	(188)		1,376
<b>High Needs Block</b>	<b>25,619</b>	<b>79,997</b>	<b>95,972</b>	<b>15,974</b>	<b>41,592</b>	<b>97,139</b>
<b>Funding</b>		<b>422,730</b>	<b>437,761</b>			<b>440,642</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,650</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,031</b>	<b>15,031</b>	<b>39,681</b>	<b>17,254</b>

## **Bristol Schools Forum** **School Sufficiency**

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	23 May 2023
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	5.00pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Zoom Meeting
<b>Report Author:</b>	Reena Bhogal-Welsh (Director of Education & Skills)

### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To update Schools Forum on school place planning across Bristol.

### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That Schools Forum note the contents of this report.

### **3. Summary**

3.1 The city continues to experience rising in demand for secondary school places. Working with schools and academies all pupils were offered a school place in Year 7 for September 2023. 92% were offered a preference school, with 76% being offered their first preference. This is a slight reduction on 77% in 2022.

3.2 2 new free schools will open in September 2023 on temporary sites. Admissions have been outside the coordinated process and some parents were advised to also apply for an existing school within the coordinated process.

3.3 Places must be offered for all applicants through the coordinated process, resulting in some pupils receiving 2 offers. LA officers are working with Oasis to establish which offer the parent will choose.

3.4 Some capital works at some schools, required as a result of the continued need to admit over Published Admission Number (PAN) are still to be completed. This is partly due to the current economic climate and partly due the complexities of changing PFI contracts. Although funding was agreed by Cabinet in February, this was too late for some works to be completed and both Bristol Brunel Academy and Orchard School felt unable to accept further additional pupils for 2023.

3.5 The opening of the new free schools should mean a large reduction in the numbers of additional places required from 2024. There remains a forecast shortfall of places in North.

- 3.6 The trend of a reduction in the number of pupils requiring a place in Reception continues. Offers were made on 17 April, with 99% of pupils being offered a preference school, with 92% being offered their first preference. Further work with schools and trusts to co-ordinate the management of surplus primary places is planned.
- 3.7 There continues to be good progress in increasing the sufficiency of suitable Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) places. The Specialist Provision Project has delivered 162 places so far, and together with other capital works the project forecasts to deliver 501 places by September 2025.
- 3.8 The increased numbers of pupils entering secondary schools will begin to impact on demand for post-16 places.
- 3.9 There is a need to review the geographical areas served by some schools to take account of new schools and demand changes. Work on this will begin May 2023, with any changes subject to consultation in the annual admission arrangements process starting in October.

#### **4. Context**

- 4.1 Bristol has previously seen a dramatic rise in primary school pupil numbers. Reception admissions peaked in 2016 and since then numbers have continued to fall, mainly due to falling birth rates.
- 4.2 These higher primary school numbers have been impacting on secondary schools for a number of years. Many schools have already been expanded and other schools have been taking pupils above PAN. Delays to the new free schools mean this requirement has been much longer than initially expected. For any school, taking more pupils than the capacity is not sustainable in the longer term, without significant capital investment and the complexities of PFI arrangements at some schools make admitting additional pupils even more challenging.
- 4.3 The new free school projects are managed directly by the DfE and after some delays both new free schools now have planning permission in place for their permanent sites at Daventry Road and Silverthorne Lane. Both schools will open on temporary sites in September 2023.
- 4.4 Oasis Academy Daventry Road will open on a temporary site at Oasis John Williams in September 2023 and will provide up to 6 additional forms of entry (180 places per year).
- 4.5 Oasis Academy Temple Quarter will initially open in a building on the Oasis Brislington site in September 2023, before re-locating to the longer-term temporary site at Spring Street in Bedminster for January 2024. Due to the size of the building at Brislington, places are initially limited to 90, increasing to 120 after the move to Spring Street. This will provide some much needed in-year capacity from January.
- 4.6 Both schools have Funding Agreements in place. Admissions have been administered by Oasis, outside the co-ordinated admission scheme, where parents make applications to the LA for places in Year 7. Places were offered on 1 March, the same day as places under the coordinated scheme. Officers are working with Oasis to establish which offer parents will

choose.

- 4.7 All parents were advised to apply for a place at an existing school under the coordinated scheme and a place was offered on 1 March. Some schools will face uncertainty about precise numbers starting in September whilst the process of cross checking with Oasis is undertaken and the appeals process is completed.
- 4.8 Although BCC is not the responsible body for the development or opening of new free schools, it does retain the statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and continuing to offer all pupils places has been very challenging. Academy Trusts and individual schools have played a major role in supporting the LA by agreeing to admit additional pupils to meet the shortfall caused by delays to the free school projects.
- 4.9 For the East Central area, the delays to capital funding being agreed and the lengthy process for PFI contract changes meant that Bristol Brunel Academy felt unable to agree to take additional students for 2023. Both City Academy and Bristol Metropolitan Academy did agree additional students, which together with new Temple Quarter free school will ensure sufficient places in the area. Schools in the area should not need to admit over PAN in future as Temple Quarter should ensure sufficiency.
- 4.10 In North there is projected to be a continued deficit of places. Works to redesign space at Orchard previously used for primary age pupils should create the additional capacity required. The opening of Oasis Temple Quarter should also help to accommodate some pupils in the central area to relieve pressure on some North area schools.
- 4.11 The South area continued to experience some over capacity for a number of years, but this situation has changed quickly, with an increase in pupils requiring places. The new Daventry Road free school will ensure sufficiency in future but some capital works are required to ensure sufficient space for both secondary pupils and special school pupils on the Bridge Learning Campus/New Fosseway site, where spaces were previously redesigned.
- 4.12 Although it was possible to offer all pupils a place at secondary school transfer there will be very few remaining spaces within secondary schools across the city. There remain whole areas of the city without places in some year groups. This continues to impact on in-year admissions with an increase in school appeals and placements through 'Fair Access' arrangements, putting these systems under increasing strain. There will be very few available places in any year groups for pupils moving into the city or requiring a change of school. Where pupils are offered places in schools that are not preferences and/or are some distance from home can affect behaviour and attendance. This can then result in increasing demand for SEND and Alternative Learning Provision.
- 4.13 Following a peak in 2016, numbers requiring places at primary schools continue to fall and places will need to be managed to avoid large numbers of empty places. A proposal was published to close St Barnabas C of E Primary in August 2023 and this was agreed by Cabinet in February. Officers are working with the school to ensure all pupils are offered a suitable alternative school.
- 4.14 Additionally, a number of schools have already reduced their PAN and others are

considering this. Officers continue to work with schools to manage the places. The places are not removed permanently but reducing PAN can make it easier for the schools to plan staffing levels with more certainty. Alternative uses of any empty space needs to be considered, including for SEND provision, if appropriate.

- 4.15 There are no indications that the falling birth rate will rise in the foreseeable future and the delivery of new homes, particularly in south Bristol, has been slower than anticipated and is not yet impacting on demand for primary school places.
- 4.16 Pupil projections are prepared annually for the DFE School Capacity Survey. These projections are used to allocate capital funding ('Basic Need') and also contribute towards decisions to approve the opening of new Free Schools. The latest announcement does not allocate any Basic Need capital to Bristol for 2025/26. This is because the new schools will ensure there is projected to be sufficient capacity.
- 4.17 The last pupil projections were included with the November 2022 Place Planning Report but are repeated here for ease of reference. New projections will be prepared for the next survey in July.
- 4.18 Year 7 pupil projections and capacities within PANs are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Year 7 pupil forecasts and capacity 2022 - 2026**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Jan 2022 Census and Projections</b>	<b>Year 7 Capacity</b>
2021/22	4,431	4,269
2022/23	4,569	4,276
2023/24	4,594	4,276
2024/25	4,642	4,276
2025/26	4,373	4,276

Oasis Temple Quarter and South Bristol not included.

- 4.19 Demand for secondary places is projected to start to fall after 2024/25, in line with previous primary school numbers. Demand in north continues to be in excess of places for some time.
- 4.20 Reception pupil projections and capacities within PANs are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Reception Year pupil forecasts and capacity 2022 - 2026**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Jan 2022 Census and Projections</b>	<b>Reception Capacity</b>
2021/22	4,977	5,746
2022/23	4,902	5,596
2023/24	4,701	5,536
2024/25	4,514	5,536
2025/26	4,557	5,536

- 4.21 Reception admissions peaked in 2016 when 5,581 children started school. Although there



is variation in some years (there was a small increase in applications for 2020 for instance) the longer-term forecasts indicate that, without a change to birth rates, demand will continue to fall.

4.22 There has also been a rise in demand for specialist provision with a large increase in the number of Education and Health Care Plans. The rise is significantly above that which would be expected from the rise in the general school population. Existing specialist provision across the city has been at or very close to capacity and a programme to increase places is progressing well.

4.23 In the October 2022 Census there were 1,211 pupils in Bristol special schools, compared to 1,119 in October 2021.

4.24 Significant progress has been made to increase SEND provision. 282 places have been delivered already with the remainder of places forecast for delivery between September 2023 and September 2025.

4.25 There is no direct 'Basic Need' capital grant funding for SEND places. The DfE have announced further capital for SEND places. It is not yet known how this will be distributed. Previous funding has been allocated based on overall pupil numbers with every LA receiving a relatively small amount rather than a bidding system to target funding.

4.26 Demand for places post-16 is forecast to rise in line with secondary school numbers. The current Year 11 has approximately 3,666 pupils, compared to around 4,421 for Year 7. The current projection only takes account of pupils registered in school sixth forms in Bristol and does not include pupils attending CLF post-16 provision, City of Bristol College or St Brendan's College. The projections below may be higher than actual numbers as place availability in the more popular provisions is restricted and students unable to gain a place choose to attend a college provision rather than smaller school sixth forms.

4.27 Projections for School Post-16 are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 2: School Sixth Form pupil forecasts and capacity 2022 - 2026**

Year	2021 Oct Census and Projections	Year 12 & 13 Capacity
2022/23	2,981	2,700
2023/24	3,131	2,700
2024/25	3,316	2,700
2025/26	3,371	2,700

4.28 Post-16 numbers vary considerably with many sixth forms operating well above the notional capacity, with more flexibility of timetabling and others well below capacity.

4.29 Trinity Academy will have a sixth form in future and plans for Oasis Academy Temple Quarter also include sixth form provision. Although there is more flexibility with accommodating post-16 pupils, some additional capacity will eventually be needed.

## 5. Financial Implications

Report Name: School Sufficiency

Author: Reena Bhogal-Welsh

Report date: 23 May 2023

- 5.1 There will continue to be a requirement for the Growth Fund as the bulge in secondary numbers works through schools. the foreseeable future. Most primary schools have now completed their growth and do not require further funding but the funding requirement for additional secondary school places is rising. Delays or variations to actual pupil demand will affect the funding required.
- 5.2 Future capital availability will be very limited with no Basic Need allocation from 2025/26.