

Bristol Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12th July, 2023
at 5.00 pm at Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Mandy Cheshire	St Bede's Catholic Colleges
Simon Eakins	Cathedral Primary
Tonya Hill	New Fosseway School
Simon Holmes	St Philips Marsh Nursery
Tracey Jones	Merchants Academy
Jo Kingston	Diocese of Clifton
Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Bristol Brunel Academy
Samantha Packer	PVI Early Years
Chris Pring	Whitehall Primary School
Cedric Sanguinol	Bishop Road Primary
Aderyn Zajicova	The Limes Nursery School

In attendance from Bristol City Council

Reena Bhogal-Welsh	Director of Education and Skills
Angel Lai	Finance Manager (Children and Education)
Claudette Campbell	Clerk to the Schools Forum

	Action
1. Welcome	
The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.	
Thanked the vice chair for leading the previous meeting.	
2. Forum Standing Business	
a. Apologies for Absence were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron Shaw • Melanie Bunce • Stephanie Williams • Kate Matheson • Steve Hornsby • Jo Willis • Marian Curran • Cllr Asher Craig • Denise Murray 	
b. Quorate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate 	
c. Resignation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that that in addition to those who had tendered their resignation the following was received from • Tracey Jones – Primary Academy Head 	
d. Appointments of New Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None to report 	
e. Notifications of Vacancies that have been advertised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Academy Secondary Governor 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 maintained primary Head • 1 maintained primary Governor • 1 Academy primary Governor • 1 special Academy Head <p>f. Declaration of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no declarations of interest 	
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd May was resolved as a correct record.</p>	
4. Update from Director of Education and Skills - Verbal Update	
<p>Reena Bhogal-Welsh (RBW) spoke to her presentation providing an update on the Family Hubs and SEND Review. The following was highlighted from her presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch events for the Family Hubs had taken place. The events included the community and the families that would be served by the venturer. • The review of the EHCP processes has commenced and the intention is to report back to the forum in the Autumn term. <p>There were no comments from forum members.</p> <p>The Forum resolved to note the report.</p>	
5. DSG Budget Monitor Period 2	
<p>Angel Lai (Finance Manager, Children and education) presented the report on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).</p> <p>The report provided information on the 2023/24 DSG position as of Period 02 to end of May 2023.</p> <p>The forum's attention was drawn to the following in the report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That with the 32% increase to funding rates to 2-year-olds, the early years overspend will improve. b. Asked to note that the budget position on LA maintained school is summarised in Table 2 in the report and not included within the Schools' Block balance figure in Table 1. c. LA maintained schools have a projected £1.5m deficit; those schools have been contacted and meetings will take place with the leadership teams to explore affordable solutions. In addition to delivering training for Governors on financial matters. <p>In answer to the questions the following was noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. Early years funding to support the 9-month-old & new children provision; the information available on the government website advises of the following uplifts - 1) 2yr increase from £6 to 7.95 per hr 2) 3-4yrs 33pence up lift 3) supplementary funding up by 24pence. To be applied from September 2023. e. The Forum was looking for the funding formula for the new offer to parents, but no details were available. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. All were reminded that 'Capital' funding to support additional places can be applied for and there were no known restrictions on individual settings doing so. g. It was suggested that the use of 'sponsor licence' could be employed to tackle the issue of lack of staffing. A sponsor licence grants permission to a UK employer to sponsor non-UK resident skilled workers. h. Action: RBW to do due diligence on this process as to whether this step can be taken by maintained settings and report back. i. AL explain that work was underway to consider the delivery of services in the current financial climate and to establish a strategic plan to sustain financial stability; the plan incorporates & is informed by current and arising issues and includes horizon planning. Learning support seminars are in place to upskill colleagues and provide additional business acumen training. AL confirmed that direct support is available to school settings to address specific issues. j. All acknowledged the difficult balancing act currently in place, that requires all settings to both reduce budgets and expand capacity to take on new service provision & users. k. The forum was assured that the points raised had been noted and that the plans being produced aims to produce creative solutions that would support ongoing need. The outcome of the work around early years will shortly be at a place to share with the forum. l. The Chair thanked the Finance Officer for the report. m. The Forum resolved to Note the report 	RBW(1)
6. Delivering Better Value in SEND Resourcing	
<p>The Director of Education and Skills, presented the report reminding the forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the programme had two workstreams b. Workstream One (1) & Two (2) governance is in place for both. The DSG Programme is part of the wider 'our families' programme governance, in the LA concerned with transformation in children's and education; those that sit in governance of the programme are drawn from professional colleagues across children's service bringing with them intelligence that will provide robust governance. c. The service has engaged an experienced external consultant as the Strategic Programme Manager. They bring with them understanding and knowledge of the national position on SEND. The Forum was reminded that the DSG is programme is part of a wider 'Our Families' programme, with 14 mitigation programmes. The appointment ensures oversight of the programmes being undertaken to deliver better value in SEND. d. Attention was drawn to section 4.5 in the report that details the planning workshop for Workstream One; to the note the timelines; to note the intention to enable collaborative working on SEND delivering. e. Workstream Two; contract procurement process is ongoing; the next step is to identify the independent delivery partner. As part of the process contenders must deliver an option report for consideration and review. This process is on track to present the final contractor details to Cabinet in December 2023. <p>The following was noted from the discussion that followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. The forum questioned how the programme would handle the loss of experienced workforce in the sector and arising vacancies. The result of which has led to a shrinking workforce and one without the right skills. 	

<p>g. Assurances were given that an aspect of the workforce action plan will consider the question of 'where is the workforce', the impact of prevailing issues such as Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis. Those involved in this project are drawn from education and health sectors because it is accepted that the solution can be applied universally to address all areas of service provision.</p> <p>h. The hope is that a Bristol Solution is devised to encourage recruitment to all sectors that are currently struggling with vacancies.</p> <p>i. Information was sought on the details around the school selection process for participants for Workstream One.</p> <p>j. Action RBW; confirmed the process being devised would be fair and that details will be provided in a format, for the next meeting, that avoids prejudice to the process.</p> <p>k. Workstream Two: Many settings are involved in funding consultation during the Autumn term and there was real concern that this may impact how they engage in the programme.</p> <p>l. Action RBW thanked the forum for sharing, agreeing that this was vital intelligence to share with colleagues. The ask of colleagues would be to factor this in to avoid consultation fatigue; to avoid adding additional pressure to settings but still ensure engagement to enable the project milestones are met.</p> <p>m. The Forum resolved to note the report.</p>	<p>RBW (2)</p> <p>RBW (3)</p>
<p>7. Early Years SEND</p>	
<p>The Director of Education & Skills presented a report, to inform and review by the forum on the progress of the Early Years SEND Panel</p> <p>The following was highlighted.</p> <p>a. In 2017 LA's were directed to establish Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to support children with emerging special educational needs in their early year's settings. The details of the operation of the fund are set out in the report.</p> <p>b. The report details the outcome from the Early Years SEND Project Plan and how the fund, allocated by the Forum, of £250,000 was used.</p> <p>c. The report details the pressures and the project spend together with the next steps.</p> <p>The following questions were arose following the presentation:</p> <p>d. Forum members agreed that it was helpful to see in the report the table displaying the increase in numbers of those children requiring support during the period 2018 to 2023. Noteworthy are the numbers of children remaining in nursery settings until their needs can be met by the primary setting.</p> <p>e. All agreed the importance of resolving issues in the early years that would then carry that child through all aspects of their education to the enable them to become a member of the adult workforce.</p> <p>f. There was an ask for clear communication on the issue of children remaining in nursery setting to counter any negative assertions on primary schools. To clarify that in many cases these settings want to meet the needs of all children but do require time to formulate a way to do so before inviting the child into that setting.</p> <p>g. Acknowledged the positive summary in the report on childhood trauma often confused with SEND and the need to overcome this by putting in place the right support to identify the actual need.</p> <p>h. The Family Hubs service provision is seen as vital in supporting families to identify and distinguish, the nature, of the additional support needed. This would ensure tailored support at</p>	

<p>the right phase. When support is provided at the earliest possible time going forward the overall need decreases and will positively impact this funding stream.</p> <p>i. RBW assured the forum that all reviews will consider the issue of sustainability and future proofing this provision.</p>	
<p>8. Any other Business</p>	
<p>The Chair thanked forum members for their attendance and Bristol City Council Officers for their reports and support that enables the forum to meet.</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm.