

Small Schools

Appendix A

Key Actions Agreed at the review meeting of 5 May 2014

Leadership, Governance and HR

Suggested Actions

1. Small schools involved in the review, with the support of Governor Services and EIS, to develop a conference for small school headteachers and chairs of governors to share existing models of leadership and governance.

Chairs and Heads workshops are now planned for 25 March and 5 May 2015. The programme is currently being finalised by the planning group. The workshop on the 25th will focus on successful small school partnerships and collaborations with inputs from Nottinghamshire small school headteachers and Chairs

2. Maximising the impact of additional HMI support across the small school community to improve understanding of successful leadership models.

This support was not delivered by HMI due to changes in their ways of working with LAs

3. Develop a NCC cross service support pack, underpinned by a clear vision for small schools, to explore principles, actions and costs of adopting alternative leadership models. (HR, finances, EIS, Governor Services)

This is an outstanding action that will be reviewed in the light of the 2 Heads and Chairs workshops planned for 25 March 2015 and 5 May 2015. Issues around capacity may impact on the exact nature of this support pack.

4. Officers to provide opportunities to visit small school successful partnerships in other counties.

Plans are still underway and it is hoped that following the workshops, heads and chairs in Nottinghamshire schools may visit each other. It is hoped that visits to identified small schools in Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire will be arranged in the summer term 2015

5. Governor services to contribute to raising the profile of the current challenges and opportunities for small schools at this time through existing heads and chairs, termly governor meetings, at points of recruitment.

Following the summer term workshops, it is hoped that the task and finish group can be further developed to explore any new tasks agreed at these workshops. The driver of all actions will be the small school heads and chairs with facilitation support from officers who will ensure that elected members are informed of the outcomes of this work with small schools.

Admissions and Place Planning (including Early Years Place Planning)

Suggested Actions

1. To support small schools, their headteachers and governing bodies to understand their own place planning projections and the implications of surplus places to plan for sustained improvement.
2. To recommend and support governing bodies in small schools vulnerable to falling rolls, deficit budget and/or provision that is less than good, undertake a feasibility study to consider their viability and the possible need for alternative leadership models.

In relation to both Place Planning and budget information, school place historical and projection data, will be provided to each small school attending the workshops. This will support Heads and Chairs to use this information to more accurately review their budgets.

3. To support small school governing bodies to consider the opportunities offered by closer partnerships, collaborations and federations, to secure good and outstanding provision.

The focus of both workshops will be on models of partnership. Additional actions in relation to providing information will be informed by feedback from small school headteachers and Chairs

SEND

Suggested Actions

1. Small schools to further explore the employment of a shared SENCO across an agreed number of schools.

During this current phase of the task and finish groups, SEND officers did explore this and provided clear guidance that it was legally possible for small schools to share SENCOs.

2. NCC to consider how data can be used to reflect on the distribution of SEND and of SEND resources across different groups and types of schools including small schools and academies. This should include a revision of family arrangements for allocating AFN funding to small schools with a disproportionate number of SEND pupils

A paper is to be presented to Schools Forum in February 2015 recommending further refinement of the AFN funding process. The principal aim of these refinements is to provide the Local Authority with flexibility in its process for allocating AFN resources to recognise schools which have a disproportionately high number of High Needs pupils, including in some small schools.

Finance

Suggested Actions

1. *Whilst a paper was proposed to be taken to schools forum to raise the profile of small schools and clarify their particular issues this was superseded by the Schools Funding Formula consultation for 2015/16. The consultation took place at the Schools Forum on 23 October 2014 and the lump sum allocation was discussed as part of that. The questions asked as part of the consultation were as follows;*

Question: *Do you agree with the proposal to keep the lump sum value at £100,000 in 2015/16 for the Primary Phase?*

Response: *Votes for - 11, Votes against - 1, Abstentions – 0*

Do you agree with the proposal to keep the lump sum value at £100,000 in 2015/16 for the Secondary Phase?

Response: *Votes for - 10, Votes against - 0, Abstentions – 2*

As a result of the vote the lump sum will remain at £100,000 for 2015/16.

ICT Provision

Suggested Actions

1. NCC has responded by offering a 18 month contract to schools for the price of 12 months to bring NCC to the end of the current contract with BT.

The concerns around the costs of broadband continue although the offer of the 18 month contract was welcomed.

2. When negotiating the new contract NCC should pay cognoscente of the implications of cost on small schools and consider developing some kind of banded charges based on actual pupil numbers.
3. *The pricing for the new Network – Emcloud reflects the actual cost for the service and represents a significant saving on the cost of 1C1N. All schools have received notification of the price for the service. The prices received from Virgin Media Business – the new provider result in savings for all schools and have been banded so schools should pay a maximum of approx. £4,240 per annum. Where special circumstances result in a cost higher than this, we will be contacting schools to discuss the reasons and options for reducing the cost to the school.*
4. Ensure that small schools understand the implications of using alternative providers in relation to speed and hidden costs.

ICT have written to all schools on this subject and included a FAQ and service description.