

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum
Date and time: 15th June 2023, 2pm to 4pm
Location: Diverse Academies Trust, Education Centre, Head Office, Old Hall Dr, Retford DN22 7EA

Membership

'A' denotes absence

A	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
A	Ben Waldram	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
A	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Helen Roberts	Maintained Primary Head Teacher – (Vice Chair)
A	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher substitute sent Kirsty Lowde
A	Halina Angus	Academy Representative
	Anne Hall	Academy Representative
	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
A	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
	Daniel Moore	Academy Representative
	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
A	Louise Knott	14-19 Partnership Representative
	Joe Jefferies	Trade Union Representative - NASUWT
A	Jo Myers	Trade Union Representative - UNISON

In attendance:

Cllr Tracey Taylor	Misterton Division
Peter McConnochie	Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Karen Hughman	Group Manager, Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager
Naomi Clark	Senior Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Sarju Sheta	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Jason Gooch	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

<p>1.</p>	<p>Welcome</p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed members, with a special welcome to Sarju Sheta who has taken over from Mark Needham who has now left the Local Authority and Kirsty Lowde a member substitute for David Phillips with a reminder to members that once in an academic year members can send a substitute with full voting powers.</p> <p>Sarju Sheta introduced himself, he's been with Nottinghamshire County Council for 4 weeks now, has 30 years of Local Authority experience within adult social care, and SEND funding. Neil Holmes was thanked for hosting the meeting at the Diverse Academy Trust.</p> <p>One resignation has been received from Ben Waldram. On behalf of the members of the Nottinghamshire Early Years and School Forum, we would like to thank Ben for his support during his time on the Forum.</p> <p>Ben Waldram would like to pass on his regards and the following statement: - "Have really benefitted from listening to their expertise; enjoyed thinking strategically about how best we can serve the children in our care; and have enjoyed the challenge of being out of the office and thinking about wider areas outside of my own school. All the best for the future"</p> <p>Toni Gardner gave an update regards Forum vacancies, adverts went out with a closing date of 9th June unfortunately no responses were received, advert to go back out with a new closing date of Friday 21st July. Members were encouraged to talk to their schools and contacts and encourage self-nomination.</p>
	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received Andrew Rossington, Ben Waldram, Steve Border, David Phillips (substitute sent Kirsty Lowde) Halina Angus, Neil Robinson, Andy Palmer, Louise Knott, Nigel Frith, Cllr Sinead Anderson, Colin Pettigrew, Lynda Poole and Irene Kakoullis.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes – 23 February 2023</p> <p><u>Trade Union</u> This is down as an agenda item and will be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p><u>3a 2023-24 Schools Funding Formula Update</u> Appendix A now updated to show the final approved factor values</p> <p>Query to understand more about the 1.43% discrepancy between percentage increase in the funding allocation between schools and early years.</p> <p>Email was sent to members to explain –</p> <p>Comparing the two blocks does show that the Schools Block had a funding percentage increase of 6.59% which is 1.48% greater than the Early Years Block funding percentage increase of 5.10%. It's worth noting that between 2021/22 and 2022/23 the Schools Block saw an increase in funding of 3.98% with the Early Years Block seeing a slightly higher percentage increase to funding, this being 4.39%.</p> <p>Why each block of the DSG has a different increase in funding each year is harder to pinpoint. One of the contributing factors will be pupil numbers. The School's Block is funded for 112,183 pupils in 2022/23 and 113,488 pupils in 2023/24. Due to how the Early Years indicative funding allocation is calculated the pupil numbers used to derive this amount is the same in 2022/23 as it is for 2023/24, this being 18,784 pupils. As the Schools Block has seen an increase in pupil numbers year on year but the Early Years Block pupil numbers are constant, this could help explain why the funding increases per block are different. Pupil numbers aside, drawing comparisons between each funding block of the DSG is difficult as each block has its own funding formula and are independent of each other. Ultimately the amount each block is increased by is out of the hands of the Local Authority as it is Central Government that decided on which</p>
	<p>ACTION</p>

	<p>blocks are increased, the factors driving this, and the weight assigned to each factor. All that can be do as a Local Authority is undertake lobbying towards the Government if it is felt that any element of the DSG is insufficient (similarly to what has been done in recent years with the High Needs Block).</p> <p>Working group for Early Years TPG & TPECG – this as an agenda item and members will be updated at that point.</p> <p>Action point for Karen Hughman a meeting to take place straight after forum to discuss with Matt Rooney. Deferred meeting so will report back next time.</p> <p>Remaining minutes approved as accurate.</p>	<p>KH</p>
<p>3. 3a Local Area SEND Inspection verbal update</p>	<p>Peter McConnochie talked through what has happened to date with the SEND inspection and advised that a presentation around this would be sent out to all members.</p> <p>The local area partnership is required to prepare and submit a priority action plan to address the identified areas for priority action within 35 working days of receipt of the final report. The inspection report identifies two priority actions for the local area partnership and four areas for improvement.</p> <p>Areas for priority action – co-operation of groups to urgently identify, assess and provide for the needs of children and young people with SEND. Includes assessment of needs, timely issuing of EHC plans and holistic oversight of these plans through annual reviews.</p> <p>To urgently identify and address the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language therapy, neurodevelopmental pathways, and equipment services. To use available performance data to identify where gaps exist and whether actions taken to address these are effective.</p> <p>Ofsted action plan 18 months to 3 years for publication of report.</p> <p>Some areas of strength - CYP are positive about how their views and aspirations are reflected in their individual EHC plans and the support they receive.</p> <p>The Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum (NPCF) take an active role in representing the families of children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>Alternative provision is a positive experience for many CYP. It supports them to remain in education and prepares them for their next steps.</p> <p>Matt Rooney when ready can the early improvement plan be shared.</p> <p>Peter McConnochie early plan to be shared with Ofsted next week, draft plan will be shared wider 30 days after.</p> <p>Costing, any additional investment plans, and the possibility of using High Needs funding will be going to the Trust Board with school representation.</p> <p>James Macdonald – significant challenge for EHC assessments, SENCO workload is an impossible task.</p> <p>Discussion was had around school's review time the requirement for it to be within statutory deadline and the challenges for this to be carried out.</p> <p>A lot of work had been carried out pre-pandemic, fragmented right back.</p>	<p>TG</p>

<p>A mechanism is required to manage, evaluate, challenge collectively, hold Health and LA to account and recognise it has a challenge. Structure regulation not clearly defined. Manage parent expectation as there is no quick fix for parts of this.</p>	
<p>3b Trade Union – New Members – verbal update</p> <p>Peter McConnochie advised forum that new academies would be charged the delegation amount as agreed for existing academies and schools however to date no new academies have wanted to join the scheme.</p> <p>The LA requested guidance from the ESFA around rules for de-delegation and operation of trade union funds, the following has been received. Once funds have been de-delegated as agreed by the school’s forum, then the operational spending of this is co-ordinated by the LA. The requirement to release staff for trade union duties, de-delegation is supposed to pay for supply cover.</p> <p>Income for 2023-24 is significantly down and estimated at around £27K. Academies would pay the amount for 17 months to keep inline.</p> <p>HR are working around 4 options regards rate paid for trade union, and the impact on the de-delegation amount which will be bought back to Forum.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue with Main Scale 6 2. Main Scale 6 plus on cost 3. Actual salary cost 4. Actual salary cost plus on cost <p>LA carries out all the admin work of this, with no administration charge something that will also need to be reviewed. Funding is 70% school-based procedures 30% consultation training.</p> <p>Joe Jefferies – complex continued support necessary and a form of insurance. Should not be paying any more than 39 weeks, something that may need to be reviewed especially with a view when discussing actual costs. Payment of ‘on cost’ these are duty of employers and employees’ so still their responsibility, need to also consider actual costs would be different rates in different schools and for different teachers.</p> <p>Kirsty Lowde – maintained schools run on public money losing two members of staff every week at the highest salaries and replacing with supply limits the quality and cost the school an additional £15K extra to support these duties. The duties are supported, and all understand the importance of these duties however current funding is not sufficient and has a direct impact on schools. Comments that need to be fed into the trade union working groups.</p> <p>Peter McConnochie happy to feedback these comments to the trade union working group. The issue of 39 weeks, admin charges, not sufficient funding, and the impact of this to schools. Based on guidance received from the ESFA the Staffing Regulations Working Party will review and set the TUF rates.</p>	
<p>3c Final Accounts 2022-23</p> <p>Sarju Sheta presented the paper.</p> <p>Underspend of £9.5M was explained in detail as per report.</p>	

Main area for Schools underspend is the growth fund allocation, Central Services it's the de-delegated services and High Needs is mainly backlog of EHC plans and unavailability of spaces due to saturation of the independent market with very few places available.

Jason Gooch advised as per previous years at this time the January 2023 census has not yet been confirmed, the data counts for 7/12 of the funding therefore the current underspend is indicative, expectation is that the Early Years Block will have an underspend of £982K for last financial year the biggest driver being the number of children recorded on the January 2022 and January 2023 census is higher than the actual average throughout the year.

Appendix B provides an illustration of what's been experienced through the block last year. To provide more context to the figures Jason and the team have analysed the trends in early years numbers last year and over the last five years, this showed the numbers of universal 3- & 4-year-olds gradually decreasing on a straight-line decrease. Last year's forecast they continued with this trend, Summer 2022 was on trend Autumn 2022 numbers were lower than forecast and trend analysis, January 2023 we saw an increase for the first time in five years this increase has significantly increased the funding that we should receive through the block. Subsequently for the spring term, more has been paid out than previously forecasted, but not enough to prevent an underspend.

Funding is based on January census data and LA pay out on actual bums on seats. There is a proposal in the paper to distribute the net underspend for 2-3- and 4-year-olds out to the sector at a rate of 8p per 3- and 4-year-olds subject to final confirmation from the ESFA for early years block allocation.

Sarju Sheta DSG blocks have a surplus of £18.3M minus any commitments as detailed on page 4 and subject to approval of 2-3- and 4-year-old funding, projected surplus stands at £17.2M, which can be used to support additional expenditure complaint with School and Early Years Regulations 22-23.

Daniel Moore, a question was asked about the use of the underspend to help with the results and requirements of the recent inspection, the lack of high level needs places and provision for backlog of EHC plans.

Sarju Sheta there will be funding available due to the inspection how much of this will be used for EHC plans will need to be discussed.

James Macdonald non ISB reserve has increased sufficiently every year.

Kirsty Lowde suggested funding for an additional year for schools who are given growth fund to increase their PAN for expected year 7 pupils. Currently funding is only given to their expected year 7 pupils, if year 7 pupils have not materialise, when they enter into year 8 the funding reverts back to being based on actual census numbers which is having a large impact on secondary school and the structure put in place to accommodate the new PAN.

An idea that the growth fund could be used to maintain funding for another year (year 8) based on the predicted / expected numbers in year 7. Karen Hughman this can be investigated in more detail.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Note the contents of this report – report noted

<p>2. Note the carry forward of underspend detailed in paragraph 4 into 2023/24 – carry forward noted.</p> <p>3. Approve the distribution of the net underspend for 2-, 3- & 4-year-olds for 2022/23 to the. Unanimous approval by all members.</p> <p>Jason Gooch reiterated the amount to re-distribute is indicative based on confirmation from ESFA for Early Years Block. As previous years end of summer is when LA receives confirmed grant allocation based on the two January census making it difficult to forecast the block once know an update will be confirmed regards amount to re-distribute.</p>	<p>JG</p>
<p>3d DSG Budget Monitoring Period 2</p> <p>Sarju Sheta presented the paper.</p> <p>Purpose of the report to provide Forum with a summary of the Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) financial position for the current financial year period 2.</p> <p>The two tables were explained in detail as it's only period 2 it's very early to provide a realistic full forecast at this point, various scenarios are being worked on. For early years current January 23 numbers not yet know and 7/12 of the funding will be based on January 24.</p> <p>DfE have announced they will be increasing hourly rate for 3- and 4-year-olds from September no formal announcement yet, implications and whether to build into the forecast would need to be considered going forward.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION/S</p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of the report. – report noted 	
<p>3e Pupil Growth Fund 2023-24</p> <p>Steve Hawkins presented the paper.</p> <p>Annual report to update the forum on the distribution and use of the growth funding. For 23-24 the ESFA allocated Nottinghamshire £4.581M, in 22-23 the allocation was £4.217M. There's a commitment of £1.338M to new and growing schools allocated through the pupil number variations process leaving £3.243M</p> <p>In terms of primary growth LA's historic use of the growth funding is to ensure funding for breach in Infant Class Size (ICS), basic needs expansion and set up costs for any free school's details of this are on appendix B page 5.</p> <p>Secondary schools as agreed in June 2022 Forum are paid at the minimum per pupil rate, for 23-24 this is £5,750 per pupil appendix C lists all the eligible secondary schools for this year. List is much longer than previous year reflecting the high number of children entering year 7. Allocation for period September to March is £1.797M, academies also funded April to August spend being £1.283M this part declared to DfE through APT and not recouped, therefore cost to growth pot is £1.797M plus £200K</p>	

<p>primary commitment. £1.977M including £3.243M from pupil variation allocation leaves £1.246M unallocated for 23-24.</p> <p>James Macdonald – now have sufficient reserves would need to look how to put reserves to good use. Steve Hawkins – in year growth allocations needs to be spent on growth once in the non-LSB reserves can be used for other things. Need to be wary there is uncertainty around future funding for growth, so wouldn't want to give it all out and have nothing left if allocation in year is not enough.</p> <p>Karen Hughman - from a Local Authority perspective, would like to say a huge thank you to the Trust and the schools that have worked with the Local Authority this year to meet the needs of year 7 children demonstrated from the graph this has been a peak year therefore the pressures on our schools has been extremely high.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION/S</p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of the report. – report noted 2. Continues to monitor the use of this fund throughout 2023-24 – agreed to continue to monitor 	
<p>3f. EY TPG & TPECG Working Group Update</p> <p>James Macdonald informed members that a working group had met however it was all very complicated and no easy solution.</p> <p>Information required, will wait to see more of the work carried out by the NDNA it does appear we are in line with what neighbouring and statistical authorities are doing with this grant. In 23-24 it was rolled into block, but the funding was original allocated to schools only, to contribute to the increase in teacher pay and pension not a requirement in other early years settings.</p> <p>Karen Richards - there is a requirement to look at auditing schools and who run their early years unit to ensure these are teachers, and the benefits in schools making it constantly more attracting to work in schools and not PVI's. TPG and TPECG not something we need to rush but to continue the conversation.</p> <p>Mandy Stratford mentioned the childcare reforms and the new entitlements mentioned in the news, with the increase in hourly rate from September the requirement to re-visit the centrally retained element of the block.</p> <p>Careers in early years and the promotion of this, link to be sent out to local settings and special schools upon request.</p>	MS
<p>4. Any Other Business</p> <p>Location and dates for future meetings was discussed and the following was agreed: -</p> <p>Thursday 21 September 2023 – Virtual Teams meeting Thursday 9 November 2023 – Foxwood Academy (in person only) Wednesday 6 December 2023 – Queen Elizabeth Academy (in person only) Wednesday 28 February 2024 – Virtual Teams meeting Thursday 13 June 2024 – St Giles (in person only)</p>	

5.	Confidentiality		
	There were no confidential items.		
6.	Date and time of next meeting		
	Thursday 21 September 2023	2-4pm	Virtual Teams meeting
	Thursday 9 November 2023	2-4pm	Foxwood Academy (in person only)
	Wednesday 6 December 2023	2-4pm	Queen Elizabeth Academy (in person only)
	Wednesday 28 February 2024	2-4pm	Virtual Teams meeting
	Thursday 13 June 2024	2-4pm	St Giles (in person only)

DRAFT