

# Minutes of Schools Forum

Monday 18 January 2021 at 2.30pm  
Virtual online meeting via MS Teams

**Present:**

D. Irish (Chair)  
N Toplass (Vice Chair), M Arnall, J Bailey, S Baker, L Bray, J Barry, D Barton,  
L Howard, W Lawrence, G Linford, K Morgan, P Shone, J Smallman and J  
Topham.

**Officers:** C Ward, R Kerr, A Timmins, S Lilley, M Tallents, J Gill, S Parkes and C  
Robinson.

**1/21 Apologies:**

No apologies were received.

**2/21 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair, D Irish declared an interest in item 5: Pupil Number Growth  
Funding.

**3/21 Minutes**

**Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020  
were a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Page 7 Minute No 56/30 paragraph 4 – The model for 2021/22  
should read 2021/22.



## Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 December 2020

Minute No 54/20 – P Shone advised that Schools had not received any response from the DfE. The Local Authority had responded to the DfE Officers would continue to chase this up with the DfE.

## DSG Allocation and Schools Revenue Funding 2021/22

Schools Forum received the report advising on allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the draft school budget information for 2021/22 that were announced and voted on at Schools Forum on 14 December 2020.

The Forum was brought up to date on the Department for Education (DfE) DSG block allocations for 2021/22 (section 4.1 in the report):

<b>DSG Block</b>	<b>Allocation prior to adjustments</b>	<b>Adjustments</b>	<b>Allocation after adjustments</b>
	£m	£m	£m
Schools	297.545	0	297.545
Central School Services	2.249	0	2.249
High Needs	55.738	(2.072)	53.666
Early Years	24.877	0	24.877
<b>Total</b>	<b>380.409</b>	<b>(2.072)</b>	<b>378.337</b>

A comparison of the funding and the pupils from 2020/21 as follows:

<b>DSG Block (After Adjustments)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Schools Block Allocation	£274.03m	£297.545m
Pupil Numbers	54,699	55,511
Central Schools Services	£2.020m	£2.249m
Pupil Numbers	54,699	55,511
High Needs Block allocation	£49.681m	£53.666m
Pupil Numbers in Special School	721	721
Early Years Block allocation	£24.351m	£24.877m
3 & 4-year-old Universal PTE	6,103	6,083
3 & 4 year-old – Additional 15 Hours PTE	1,521	1,655
2 Year-old PTE	1,464	1,419
Early Years Pupil Premium (This funding is included with the Early Years Allocation above)	£0.230m	£0.262m
Disability Access Fund (This funding is included within the Early Years allocation above).	£0.081m	£0.088m



The DfE had agreements with agencies to purchase a single national licence for all state funded schools. The agreement covered both academies and maintained schools, the charge was deducted by the ESFA from the DSG. The charge for Sandwell for 2021/22 was £0.269m (excl. VAT).

The Early Years Block allocations were indicative and had been based on the 2020 January census data for schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision. The DfE had stated that the basis for a review of the allocations would take place Spring 2021.

The High Needs Block allocations were provincial figures which would be updated initially in March 2021. The import/export adjustment would be updated in June with the updated information from the January 2021 school census data and Individual Learning Record data. Further adjustments would be made in April to reflect those wanting an adjustment due to the change place notifications.

The School Block funding had been distributed through the main funding formula and is £296,454,110.

Description	£
Schools Block DSG	297,545,210
Less Pupil Number Growth Contingency	(1,091,100)
Schools Block DSG Available to distribute	296,454,110

The school funding model had been submitted to the DfE on 7 January 2021 to meet its deadline of 21 January 2021. Confirmation of receipt was still outstanding.

The Proposed Formula in respect of Primary and Secondary ratio had been agreed by Cabinet on 13 January 2021.

The authority was still awaiting confirmation on the basic entitlement rate (AWPU) as well as the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and MFG Ceiling. Once the information had been received it would be released to schools.

The Chair asked whether there was any indication of when the, MFG, the MFG Ceiling and AWPU rate would be released. Officers confirmed that a model has been submitted and now the DfE had to ensure that everything that was included met with the school regulations. A response had been chased and the authority was now awaiting confirmation.

G. Linford sought assurance that Early Years Funding was not going to be affected negatively because of low numbers in attendance on the census day due to the current situation. Officers advised that schools should count the



number of children on roll as indicated in government guidance. However, there was an expectation that DfE policy in this respect could change. It was confirmed that as no schools with nurseries had indicated they were restricting uptake of places to parents that every child on the school roll should be counted in the census as if they were in attendance at the school.

The Chair was concerned that this message be communicated to all schools, Officers confirmed that this would be confirmed to schools.

**Agreed** that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

6/21

## **Pupil Number Growth Funding**

### **Schools Forum received a report in respect to allocation of Pupil Number Growth Funding and additional needs funding to schools experiencing significant pupil growth.**

The budget for Pupil Number Growth Funding for 2020/21 was set at £2.269m while the authority had received a positive recoument adjustment of £0.551m. Total funding available was £2.820m.

Expenditure as of the 31 December 2020 was £1.787m which gave an under spend of £1.033m.

In regard to Pupil Number Growth, additional needs fund carried forward a balance of £234,501 from 2019/20, with no spend currently to date in 2020/21.

Officers detailed mid-year admissions where the schools have had a minimum net increase of 30 pupils over the previous 2019/2020 October census and where the LA would automatically calculate funding for schools who met the criteria so there was no longer a requirement for schools to submit applications, the pupil figures had been confirmed by October 2019/20 census.

Officers confirmed the Pupil Number Growth Funding for those with Additional Need as follows:

<b>School</b>	<b>IDACI Funding (£)</b>	<b>EAL Funding (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Wood Green Junior	0	3,455	3,455
Lightwoods Primary	2,738	18,753	21,491
Sacred Heart	0	7,896	7,896



Ormiston Forge	0	17,894	17,894
Shireland Collegiate	0	37,935	37,935
RSA Academy	0	10,736	10,736
Wodensborough Academy	0	23,620	23,620
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>120,289</b>	<b>123,027</b>

Schools Forum members were asked to consider that schools met the criteria for Pupil Number Growth funding and the additional needs funding and approve the total funding for each school as set out in the report.

The Chair Moved that Schools Forum vote on the above allocations, he would be abstaining from the vote due to the interest declared at the start of the meeting.

The results of the vote were as follows:

**Votes For: 13**

**Votes Against: 0**

**Abstained: 1**

**Agreed** that schools met the criteria for Pupil Number Growth funding and the additional needs funding and that the total funding for each school as set out in the report be approved.

7/21

## **SEN and High Needs Block – Period 9 Monitoring report**

Schools Forum received a report, tabled prior to the meeting, on High Needs Block monitoring.

Apologies were given for the lateness of the report.

Officers stated that the High Needs Block grant for 2020/21 stood at £48.583 million. Table one of the report set out the budget allocation.

The anticipated year surplus as noted for 31 October 2020 projected to 31 March 2021 was £0.137 million. This figure had been adjusted to an anticipated deficit of £0.193 million.



<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Budget 2020/21 £000</b>	<b>Anticipated Outturn 31/3/21 £000</b>	<b>Variance from Budget £000</b>
1) Out of Borough Placements	4,929	6,137	1,208
2) Pupil Top Up and Place Funding	29,433	30,202	769
3) Post 16 Colleges	2,323	2,660	337
4) Hospital PRU	1,073	1,173	100
5) SEN Support Services	1,412	1,275	(137)
6) Support for Inclusion	4,574	3,910	(664)
7) Alternative Provision	1,911	1,287	(624)
8) SEN Developments	1,099	516	(583)
9) Other SEN Funding	1,677	1,534	(143)
10) Exclusions & Reintegration	152	82	(70)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,583</b>	<b>48,776</b>	<b>193</b>

The only change to the main variances was Post 16 Further Education Colleges and Special Providers with a £337,000 overspend. Contacts had been finalised all but three. There had been a significant increase in numbers of post 16 students.

Officers noted that other SEN funding had not changed and stood at £1.677m.

With regards to the Focus Provision there was an average under occupancy as of 31 December 2020 of 16%.

A meeting took place at the beginning of January 2021 to discuss place planning across Focus Provision and Special Schools in the future.



There were nine consultations out with schools that would reduce the vacancies from 32 to 23 once agreed.

The Commissioned places in Special Schools, purchased at the beginning of the financial year were not the actual numbers that the School could accommodate.

Occupancy at each school were as follows:

	Commissioned Places	Occupancy 31 December 2020
The Orchard	145	145
The Meadows	185	184
The Westminster	210	219
Shenstone/Brades	95	94
Total	635	635

The Forum was updated that the data for the PRUs has been run from SYNERGY since 31 December 2020.

As far as officers are aware all years 7s are recorded the under-numbers are being attributed to the issues surrounding lockdown and the ongoing difficulties.

Occupancy at each School against the commissioned places is as follows:

	Commissioned Places	Occupancy at 31 December 2020	Vacancies
Sandwell Community School	180	134	-46
Primrose	25	19	-6
Albright	50	40	-10
Total	255	193	-62

Comments and questions from members of Schools Forum and responses were as follows:

- N. Toplass, asked whether since there was a deficit for this financial year, if there was going to be a revisit to the ongoing staff vacancies which have not being appointed to help support deficit. Officers stated that vacancies had been taken into account and the majority had been appointed to. There remained one or two outstanding vacancies which would be considered in the next financial year.



- The team was still looking to appoint the Educational Psychology Team and reviewing the Secondary Exclusions Team. It was confirmed that the Secondary Exclusion Team appointments would be in consultation with Secondary schools.

Schools Forum were asked to note the contents in relation to 2020/21 High Needs Block grant budget monitoring for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, and to note the data provided on the commissioned places and special provision occupancy as of 31 December 2020.

**Agreed:** The Schools Forum noted the contents of the report in respect to High Needs Block grant budget monitoring for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020 and to note the data provided on the commissioned places and special provision occupancy as of 31 December 2020.

8/21

AOB

There was no other business.

**The Next Virtual Meeting of Schools Forum: 8 March 2021 @ 2.30pm**

**Meeting ended at 15.14**

[Watch Schools Forum - 18 January 2021](#)

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