

# Minutes of Schools Forum

**Monday 26 February at 2.00pm  
Online Virtual Meeting via MS Teams**

**Present:**

**Maintained Primary**

S Baker, J Barry A Gilbert, S Mistry and W Lawrence.

**Maintained Secondary**

C Handy-Rivett.

**Maintained Special Schools**

O Flowers.

**Governors**

E Benbow.

**Academy Primaries**

L Bray, J Farmer and R Reed.

**Academy Secondaries**

M Annull, G Faux, L Moore, and J Topham.

**Special Academy**

N Toplass (Chair).

**Officers:**

Julie Andrews (Assistant Director - Education Services);  
Abi Asimolowo (Head of Financial Business Partnering);  
Elaine Taylor (Finance Business Partner);  
Prakash Patel (Senior Accountant);  
Sara Baber (Early Years Lead);  
Connor Robinson (Democratic Services Officer); and  
John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).



## 8/24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from K Featherstone, C Hadley, L Mason and D Steen.

## 9/24 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

## 10/24 **Early Years Provider Rates 2024/25 Consultation**

Forum considered the Early Years Provider Rates 2024/25 Consultation.

On 27 October 2021, the Chancellor announced the Government would invest additional funding for the early years' entitlements for two, three and four-year olds worth £160m in 2022 2023, £180m in 2023-2024 and £170m in 2024-2025. This would allow local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to early years providers for the Government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflected cost pressures, as well as anticipated changes in the number of eligible children. On 29 November 2023 the Department of Education (DfE) published the indicative funding rates for Local Authorities.

Local authorities were required to consult providers on annual changes to their local formula. Any changes to funding need to be approved by Schools Forum.

The early years national funding formula hourly rates had been increased by £0.77 per hour for two year olds and £0.27 (4.9%) per hour for three and four year olds.

There was an increase in the Early Years Pupil Premium funding from 66p per hour to 68p for all eligible children. The age range of eligibility had also increased to include disadvantaged 2 year olds. This would create a distinction between the newly funded working parents of 2 year olds, who would receive £8.48 per hour, and our



targeted 40% most disadvantaged 2 year olds, who would receive £9.16 if they meet the eligibility criteria.

On 29 January 2024 the Quality Early Years and Child Care Team started a consultation via email to 87 Day Care Providers and 92 Child Minders as they were providers who deliver the Two Year Old funding and the Nursery Education Funding in Sandwell's Private Voluntary and Independent childcare sector. The consultation had also been sent to all Primary and Infant Schools. The consultation ended on 9 February 2024.

The consultation centred around the question of whether there was agreement in the local authority's proposal that full funding increase should be added to the base rate of hourly funding for all 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds and that the flexibility rate (30p) and deprivation payment (maximum 25P), as defined by our Single Funding Formula (SFF), should remain the same.

It was deemed that all schools and providers would benefit from an uplift in the base rate of funding and keep the flexibility and deprivation payments at the same rate as paid previously.

The response to the question 'With the introduction of the Extended Entitlements for working parents of 2 year olds from April 2024 the basic rate of funding for 2 year olds will increase from £7.71 to £8.48. Do you agree that the additional funding should be added to the base rate for all 2 year olds? Was:

100% of responses agreed with this proposal.

The response to the question 'Do you agree that Sandwell MBC should increase the basic rate of funding for 3 and 4 Year olds by the full increase given by the DFE of 27p per hour per child? This will be a 4.9% increase in the basic rate of funding from £4.79 per hour to £5.06 per hour' was:

99% of responses agreed with this proposal.

Following questions and comments from Forum members, the following was highlighted:-



- the formula would ensure that the 95% pass through rates as a minimum was achieved;
- every local authority was allocated different funding levels and rates from the DfE, Sandwell had higher rates than the other Black Country local authorities;
- any increase in rates was passed on to providers, the Council did not hold back any incrementing rates.

**Resolved** that Schools Forum:

- (1) Approve the increase of the Two-Year-old hourly rate from £7.71 to £8.48;
- (2) Approve the increase of the Three and Four-year-old hourly rate from £4.79 to £5.06.

Meeting ended at 2.20pm

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