

**Schools Forum**

Date: 20 June 2024

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Via MS Teams

Paper

**A**

Public

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS****Present****School Forum Members**

Bill Dowell (Chair)  
John Hitchings – (Vice Chair)  
Shelley Hurdley- Early Years  
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher  
Sian Lines – Diocese of Hereford  
Andrew Smith – Independent Post 16  
Sandra Holloway – Primary governor  
Carla Whelan – Executive headteacher  
Sarah Finch – Marches Academy Trust  
Sarah Godden - TrustEd  
Alison Ashley- Special School Representative  
James Pearson - TMBSS  
Reuben Thorley – Secondary headteacher  
Marilyn Hunt – Primary Headteacher  
Sue Lovecy - Headteacher  
John Boken – NEU  
Rachel Williams – Primary Headteacher

**Members**

Kirstie Hurst-Knight

**Officers**

David Shaw  
Andy Nicholls  
Stephen Waters  
Jo Jones  
Neville Ward  
Helen Owen

**Observers**

Roger Evans  
Nick Bardsley

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from James Staniforth, Stephen Matthews, Gwilym Butler, and Sarah North. Sarah Godden advised that she would be leaving at 9.45 am.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

**3. New Childcare Offers**

Neville Presented his paper.

- **A summary of**

- Wraparound childcare grant funding.
- New entitlement and wraparound capital grant funding.
- Increases to free EY entitlement funding.



- Delivery support Grant.

#### 4. **Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2023-24**

Stephen Waters presented his paper.

- The 2023-24 forecast outturn position for the DSG is a £3.929m in-year deficit.
- This deficit needs to be added to the £2.181m DSG surplus carried forward from 2023-24 resulting in a forecast cumulative DSG deficit of £1.748m

#### **Early Years Block**

- The forecast outturn position for the Early Years Block is showing a £0.270m overspend against a provisional budget of £17.868m.
- Forecast pressure of £0.332m on the SEND Support against a budget set of £0.600m
- This position on the Early Years budget is provisional and could change once the final 2023-24 Early Years DSG allocation is published in July 2024

#### **High Needs Block**

- The forecast outturn position for the High Needs Block is an in-year deficit of £3.232m against a centrally controlled High Needs Budget of £29.100m. This budget excludes the place funding element of the High Needs Block totalling £9.412m.

#### **Independent Special schools**

- Increase in demand shown by increase in numbers.
- Increase in average termly cost per placement.
- Increase in value of, and number of contributions to complex, Joint funded placements with social care and the Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

#### **Top Up Funding to Special Schools**

- A Forecast overspend £0.99m relates to top-up funding paid to Shropshire's special schools.
- The Forecast expenditure of £5.037m on top-up funding to Shropshire special schools is higher than previously forecast.

#### **Top Up Funding to Mainstream Schools**

- A Forecast overspend £0.226m relates to top-up funding paid to mainstream schools where forecast expenditure totals £5.926m in 2023-24. These



figures include the Graduation Support Pathway payments as well as top-up funding.

○

### **SEN Support Services**

- There is a forecast overspend of £0.665m against this budget totalling £1.898m in 2023-24. The majority of the overspend relates to one-off staffing overspends, but there is also a pressure identified of £0.067m on the Speech & Language Therapy team in relation to use of external therapists reflecting increase in demand.

David Shaw provided context to the paper.

- On a chart identifying the percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools Shropshire is ranked 138<sup>th</sup> out of 150 LAs in 2022/23.

### **DBV in SEND: Insights by Charles Sladdin**

The thematic opportunities for improvement include:

- Ensuring a greater proportion of children with SEND receive appropriate special educational support for their needs in their mainstream schools through ordinarily available provision.
- Ensuring that children are placed appropriately in local schools and receive high quality, effective provision.
- Ensuring that EHC plans deliver effective outcomes, and that an increasing number of post-16 young people with SEND are able to continue into further education, employment or training through ordinarily available provision.

Sarah Finch asked for the slides to be sent out to members so that Schools forum members could view them and whether this information could be put alongside the information from the last meeting to see the effect on Shropshire Schools and that lobbying needed to be done in order to get our voices heard.

David Shaw replied that he will bring together the information and see if the F-40 group have new modelling that will give a comparative view.

Sarah Godden made the point that School budgets are under pressure and so there can't be an assumption that SEN provision can be offset by schools doing more.

David Shaw said he would take action for the June meeting to have the forecasting work and also the overall picture with regards to High Needs from school budgets and also the relative national position.

JJ

DS

DS



5.

Reuben Thorley reiterated that it was unrealistic to expect mainstream schools to deliver special educational support without effective funding.

Mark Rogers added that he was already having to cut teaching assistance and asked whether it would be possible to have benchmark F-40 schools added to the graph next time.

John Boken brought in the union perspective and asked that people ask their unions to push on funding issues and brought up the idea that there may be a new incoming government soon that will be bringing new ideas.

The chair commented on the large amount of lobbying that Schools Forum has done and continues to do.

Carla asked if ESFA were aware of the requirements.

David Shaw replied that they are aware.

Alison Ashley commented that she was going to give a presentation at the Teaching School Council and if anybody would like to contact her with anything that she could bring up to do so.

The chair said that there is a lot of work to be done through F-40, that local MPs need to be briefed and more information is needed to support the lobbying.

#### **SEND Sufficiency update.**

Andy Nicholls presented the paper.

#### **SEND and AP the vision:**

“Shropshire Children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. We want them to thrive and live their best life.

#### **To develop sufficient local, high quality and inclusive provision across the system.**

- **Actions taken so far.**
  - Mapping.
  - Met with DFE.
  - Visited existing hubs.
  - Expressions of interests.
  - Shared with SEND Sufficiency Group.
- **Next Steps**
  - Identify new need (type and location).
  - Create scoring system for hub Expressions of Interests.
  - Visit hubs/arrange presentations.
  - Map hubs to location/need.

**Schools  
Forum  
Members**



- Meet with DFE.
- Commission works as necessary.

Marilyn Hunt asked if the Mapping exercise will be shared with Forum.

Andy replied that it would once he had worked out a way of dealing with the sensitive nature of the document.

John Boken asked how the Hubs would be funded and what criteria needed to be met to set up a hub.

Andy replied that initially it would capital funding and then the hubs have ongoing funding through the High Needs Block and that at the moment it was just expressions of interest that are being sought and then a scoring system will be put in place.

### **SEND Sufficiency and Funding Reference Group (SSFRG)**

- Executive leaders across maintained schools/Federations, MATs and SATs, including specialist providers.
- Existing links – members of SEND and AP Partnership Board, SEND Hub providers, special school providers, etc...
- Expertise and knowledge – evidence-based approach combined with local knowledge across multiple systems (health and social care will also be involved)
- Shown interest and commitment in promoting inclusive practice.

### **SSFRG intended outcomes:**

6.

- Identify the opportunities to build capacity and confidence of the mainstream workforce, along with parents and CYP, to enable a greater proportion of CYP's needs to be successfully met in mainstream schools through ordinarily available provision (SOAP)
- To develop a continuum of SEND (and AP) provision from mainstream to the most complex special.
- To develop a sufficiency plan to enable CYP to access the right provision, at the right time, and as local to them as possible so that CYP can be appropriately placed in local, high quality and effective state funded provision.
- To develop a sustainable funding model (mainstream to special) that successfully enables the continuum of provision to operate across Shropshire and removes the need for almost all INMSS provision.

### **Schools Forum Work Programme & Membership**

Jo Jones presented the paper.



7.

20 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Year High Needs Forecast and Draft DSG recovery Plan.</li> <li>• Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25.</li> <li>• Growth Fund Allocations 2023-24 and 2024-24</li> <li>• Early Years Block Allocations 2023-24 and 2024-25</li> <li>• Final Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2023-24</li> </ul>
12 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Dedicated Schools Grant Update 2023-24</li> <li>• Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25</li> <li>• Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26</li> <li>• Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25</li> </ul>
7 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2025</li> <li>• Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25</li> </ul>
5 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Funding arrangements 2025-26</li> <li>• Consultation on the Central retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2025</li> <li>• Central Schools Services Block 2024-25</li> </ul>
9 January 2025 (provisional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraordinary meeting if needed to make decisions on APT submission</li> </ul>
23 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Revenue Funding Settlement 2025-26</li> <li>• Shropshire Schools Forum Constitution</li> </ul>
20 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25</li> <li>• High Needs Block 3 Year forecasting</li> </ul>

Jo Jones shared the list of members of Schools Forum Members and commented on the improved amount of people that have now joined.

John Boken mentioned someone who would like to join Schools Forum and Jo said that she would look into it and get back to them.

### Communications

8.

Bill Dowell shared the news that this will be Jo Jones' last School Forum Meeting and thanked her for all the work she has done.

Kirstie Hurst-Knight said that she is arranging a meeting with Leslie Picton and Shropshire MPs and will need to clarify some figures with David Shaw.

Schools Forum Members were invited to contact Kirstie with anything they would like to raise.

**Schools  
Forum  
Members**



Bill Dowell reiterated the idea of the AP vision, that the Schools Forum is a place to be champions of our children and to Lobby on their behalf.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

20<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
12<sup>th</sup> September  
7<sup>th</sup> November  
5<sup>th</sup> December

Meeting was closed at 9.48 am

