

The KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

(Schools Funding Consultative Group)
meeting held on **Friday 23rd January 2009**
9:15am at the Deighton Centre

**Item
2**
06.02.09

Present:

	Nursery School Heads (1)
Bernie Boryslawskij, Carol Crossland, Michelle Lee (Vice-chair) , Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (6)
Caroline Thompson	Middle School Heads (1)
Jackie Eames, Toby Eastaugh, Christine Spencer (Chair)	High School Heads (4)
	Special School Heads (1)
Jo Bailey-Taylor (NASUWT), Pat Colling (Kirklees Governors Association), Gillian Collins (ATL), Sarah Ellis (pre-School Learning Alliance), Howard Roberts (NUT)	Non-school members (6)
Julie Bowdidge (Principal Improvement Manager, Learning Service) Angela Farmer (Senior Finance Officer (Resources & Support) Warwick Firmin (School Funding Strategy Manager, R&S); Clerk David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager, R&S); Minute Clerk	Kirklees Children & Young People Service Officers in Support
	Observers

1. Apologies for Absence

Mark Ayres (Resources & Support), Gill Goodswen (KPH)[Bernie Boryslawskij substituting], Julie Helm (KNSH), Janet Tolley (KSHS).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising from meeting 9 January

3.1 2009-10 DSG Strategy update [minute 3.1 of the 9 January meeting]

Version 7 of the strategy list was circulated to the meeting. Further to some of the agreements reached at the last meeting, the excess figure has reduced from the £995k showing on version 6a to just under £790k on version 7. Decisions are still to be formally reached on the Pupil Referral Unit proposals, the PPP life-cycle costs issue and whether schools other than high schools will support an expansion of the Head Teacher Wellbeing support programme.

3.2 Standards Fund update 2009-10 [minute 3.2 of 9 January]

David Thompson of the Learning Service has been charged with managing the National Challenge funding together with the School Improvement Partnership programme. His view is very much that the two funding streams are completely separate. At the moment the Children & Young People Service's budget is subsidising the SIP grant contribution to the activity. It is likely that the ChYPS budget contribution can be reduced in future taking into account the new National Challenge approach.

Work has started in response to the new Making Good Progress grant and a proposal will be brought to the Schools Forum at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 PPP life cycle costs [minute 5.1.2 of 9 January]

It was confirmed that the breakdown of the schools incurring these specific costs will be taken to the next KSHS meeting.

4. PRU Formula Funding [Lynn Nickson, Principal Improvement Manager for Inclusion, Dennis Shields, Pupil Referral Service Manager, Martin Ridge, Headteacher of Westfields Pupil Referral Unit and Jayne Foster Assistant Head of the ETHOS Pupil Referral Unit all attended the meeting for this item].

The invited officers and staff representing the Pupil Referral Units jointly gave a powerpoint presentation to provide the further background information requested by the Schools Forum. The proposal for relocation of the Primary PRU and the provision of a cohesive support service for primary schools was also touched upon in the session.

A wide-ranging discussion ensued with the main focus being placed upon budget monitoring arrangements and the staffing structures for the various areas of activity.

Q. How are the PRU budgets monitored?

The Learning Service monitors expenditure and income on a 4-weekly basis throughout the year. The budgets also fall under the scrutiny of the Finance Unit and the Schools Forum as the costs are set against the retained Dedicated Schools Grant budget. The PRUs also have to report regularly to their joint Management Committee (broadly equivalent to a school's governing body).

Q. Why do the PRU staffing structures appear to have so many Teaching & Learning Responsibility posts?

The PRUs have had to undergo the same TLR review process as schools. Relevant LA officers and the Management Committee have been involved. At ETHOS there are fewer TLRs in the structure than there were management allowances under the previous structure. It was also pointed out that neither of the PRUs have a Deputy Head Teacher post meaning that some responsibility naturally has to be carried by the next tier down.

It was also suggested that an analysis of the number of guided learning hours delivered would be useful information to have.

Q. Would the pressure in the Independent School Fees budget be reduced by developing Pupil Referral Unit provision in Kirklees?

The issue of paying exorbitant costs of external provision for the more extreme cases will be covered within the wider SEN review. It is in everyone's interest to minimise the need to resort to sending pupils to provisions in other authorities.

Q. Why are so many pupils educated on a costly one-to-one basis?

The very nature of the children ETHOS deals with means that there will usually be some element of one-to-one tuition that is needed to get the pupils re-engaged with learning. Very often this has to take place in the child's home or at a "neutral" venue. The service has a corps of experienced "sessional" staff that it can draw upon to react to varying patterns of demand for such tuition as this is seen to be the most cost-effective way of dealing with it. It was questioned whether the system was operating with sufficient rigour to ensure that one-to-one costs were being kept as low as possible and that, wherever, possible alternative arrangements are being used.

Q. Why is attendance at the Genesis Unit so low (54.6% according to the report circulated)?

The figure is artificially depressed by maternity leave requirements. Once these absence entitlements are removed the true attendance rates are much higher.

The meeting was reminded that the Schools Forum's consideration of the budget issues at the PRUs represents the first stage in the process. PRU activity will fall within the wider SEN Review processes as well.

At this point the visitors were thanked for their attendance and the information they provided.

The Schools Forum then proceeded to consider a response to the proposals on the table.

Westfields PRU – there was general agreement that there was a demonstrable need for the two additional teachers contained in the proposal – one to satisfy PPA requirements for the core teaching staff and one to provide the necessary flexibility to protect the outreach work taking place in secondary schools. However, the agreement to this second new teaching post was seen to negate the need to provide Westfields with a new £25,100 cover budget line – the Schools Forum's view is that this should be removed from the proposal.

ETHOS PRU

- 1) A view was taken that the staffing of the Genesis Unit should really be equivalent to the structure in place for Phoenix. If accepted, this would reduce the funding attached to Genesis by about £21,000.
- 2) The Schools Forum was particularly concerned about escalating one-to-one tuition costs and would like officers to take a view as to how much of the £156,600 it would be possible to trim back and set the service a revised target figure to work within.

Primary PRU – the Schools Forum has concerns about the proposal as it is currently framed. What is needed is a firm proposal with regard to where the PRU will be moved to. The Schools Forum has in the past agreed to set aside funding for similar purposes only for the initiative to founder because suitable accommodation could not be secured. With the current pressure in the DSG, the Schools Forum cannot afford to be placed in that position again. There were concerns expressed about the proposal to de-delegate the Claremont Service where around one third of primary schools are not buying into the offer at the moment, sometimes as a result of perceived quality issues but also as a way of funding their own behaviour strategies particularly in terms of staffing lunchtime potential flashpoints. There was some acceptance of the view that there is inequity between the BESD service provided for primary schools compared to the support that exists for secondary pupils. More detail is needed to support the initial proposals.

General points

- 1) The PRU budgets should be subject to the general budget cut that schools will face for 2009-10. [This implies that when schools enjoy times of real terms growth the PRUs should also share in the benefit]
- 2) Information was requested as to the composition of the Pupil Referral Units Management Committee.

5. Additional Pupil Needs Funding Model

A spreadsheet was tabled which illustrated the allocation figures for the compromise suggested at the 9 January meeting, ie the halfway position between previous options 2A and 3A. The new model operates a threshold set at 35% assistance (the current method uses the average percentage, 30.11% in 2008-09) with pupils above the threshold attracting £475 each and assisted pupils below the threshold funded at £93.60. Once again the distribution dish is made 'shallower' by the redistribution effect – those schools with fewer than 8% assisted pupils and those with greater than 35% lose funds in comparison to the current distribution method. The compromise model slightly moderates the largest identified funding reductions in comparison to previous options considered by the Schools Forum.

There was general support for this option to be put before constituent groups as the Schools Forum's preferred model for change for 2009-10. KSHS reiterated their position that this should be viewed as a first step towards the more radical redistribution approach previously labelled 2B.

6. SEN New Approaches Replacement Funding Model

The adjusted 'salmon pink' model requested by secondary schools was circulated to the meeting to show the effects on a school-by-school basis. The only change from the earlier model is that the gains and losses are phased in three equal instalments. There was still some concern apparent for the cash loss to be suffered by one high school, but this is reported to be accepted by the school's head teacher and is the result of a particularly high level of New Approaches funding in the base comparison figures.

7. Details and Agenda Items for next meeting 6 February

This meeting will be the Schools Forum's "confirmation" meeting to ratify the range of funding decisions for financial year 2009-10.

8. Agreed documentation required for feedback to Heads groups

The new Additional Pupil Needs funding model for 2009-10 (at 5 above)

The SEN New Approaches replacement funding model (at 6 above) - KHSH only

A school-by-school illustration of the cumulative effects of the four main movements in funding next year was circulated to the meeting (- cash increase in Personalised Learning, cut in AWPU/Planned Place funding to balance the DSG, and the redistributive effects of the changes to APN and New Approaches funding methods). Out of necessity, the illustration is based upon 2008-09 data so the actual effects will stand to be different when 2009-10 data is used, but the figures do give a feel for how schools might be affected by the changes. This information can be shared with constituent groups once focus has been placed upon the principles underpinning the changes.

9. Any other business

Nothing was raised.

Date and Time of next meeting

Friday 6 February 2009, 9:30am to 11:30am at the Deighton Centre, Huddersfield.