



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS' FORUM
Date and time	Thursday, 21 March 2024
Venue	Webinar – Virtual Meeting
Present	Beverley Gilbert – Brading CE Primary (Chair) Samantha Rooney – Isle of Wight College Andrew Montrose – Christ the King College Rachel Richards – Cowes Enterprise College Duncan Mills – The Bay School Steve Fairclough – Brighstone CE Primary Simon Richards – Haylands Primary Carl Wake – St Helens Primary Mandy Airey – Northwood Primary Academy Jayne Hill – Niton Pre-School & Brighstone Pre-School
Elected Member	Cllr Jonathan Bacon – Lead Cllr for Children’s Services and Education
Officers	Naomi Carter – Service Director, Education, Inclusion and Access Dean Prodomo – Service Manager, Education, Inclusion and Access Rosie Lister – Headteacher, IOW Virtual School Irina Rowan - Senior Finance Business Partner Debra Evans – Senior Accountant Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Ashley Jefferies – Head of Access and Resources Information Transport & Admissions Mike Hayward – IW Education Federation Sue Bowen – CE Diocese

1.	<u>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</u> Duncan Mills, Headteacher at the Bay School was welcomed; he was elected through the HT Forum to replace Jane Wilford as a Primary School Representative. NC and DP were welcomed and introductions made.
2.	<u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> None received.
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> None declared.
4.	<u>SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP</u> It was confirmed that the current constitution meets the requirement for schools’ members to be broadly proportionate to pupil numbers in each sector. An additional

	<p>Academy Representative and a reduction of one Secondary School Representative will be required when Carisbrooke and Medina College join a MAT on 1 June 24.</p> <p>Further adjustments may be needed, as pupil numbers decrease. Membership is reviewed annually against the autumn census data.</p> <p>Action – Clerk to manage changes and nominations</p>
5.	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 be confirmed.</p>
6.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>6.1 Notes from the sub-group meeting held on 9 February 2024 had been circulated with the papers for this meeting, along with an annual plan of work linked into the Schools Forum Powers and Responsibilities . This will continue as a live working document. (Item 4) with further work from the working party next term. NC and DP to be part of the working group-DTA for next meeting.</p> <p>6.2 The EY Central Team Structure and Budget Report (Item 9) are Included in Paper D</p> <p>6.3 The request for re-distribution of unspent Trade Unions (TU) Facilities Time payments, due to vacancies was put to the Headteachers Forum. Consensus was that the underspend should be returned to school budgets, although appreciation was conveyed for the support provided by TU Representatives. (Item 6)</p> <p>6.4 The Impact of MSG Protection and Capping and Scaling, shown as a percentage, is included in Paper D Appendix A (Item 8.8)</p>
7.	<p><u>PUPIL PREMIUM FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – Annual Report 2022 – 23</u> Paper B, Appendix A and Appendix B</p> <p>RL had submitted a report for information and gave a presentation to reflect work undertaken through 2022/23, during the partnership with Hampshire CC. She noted that there was no report to SF last year and that there had been another Virtual School Headteacher in post after Nicola Blake, before RL took up the post.</p> <p>It is not a statutory requirement for a report on the Virtual School and Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to be brought to SF, although the team are keen to continue working with SF and to provide annual updates.</p> <p>At 31 July 23, there were 300 children recorded as being in care on the Island. 218 of these were school-age, 38 are pre-school age and 44 were post-16. 20% of the children in care were in off-Island placements.</p> <p>RL gave an overview of new appointments and staff in the Virtual School Team, as noted in para 2 of the report. The team is small in relation to the high numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) on the Island.</p> <p>The Virtual School aims to promote engagement with children in care, children who have had a social worker in the last 6 years, previously Looked After Children and those in the Kinship Care Strategy. The team works in collaboration with Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT), Hampshire and IOW Educational Psychologist Service (HIEPs), SEND provision, Island Futures, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).</p> <p>IOW LAC's are included in the 'Dolly's Books' scheme, which provides a free book each month for children up to the age of 5.</p> <p>The team monitors use of PP+ funding, which is needs-based and distributed to schools to target specific needs of individual children. Personal Education Plans</p>

	<p>(PEPs) are audited to show the impact of use of the funding and inform future training needs for designated teachers.</p> <p>Additional DfE funding was received in 2023. This was allocated to schools for strategic use, based on submission of a robust plan to support this group.</p> <p>Funding for Post-16 pupils is also based on strategic planning, rather than the needs of individual pupils.</p> <p>Of the £2350 PP+ funding per child received, £1600 is passported to schools. £930 per pupil is retained to fund central services and interventions, in line with the national average of £938.</p> <p>RL highlighted how Designated Teachers work tirelessly in schools to support PP+ children.</p> <p>Appendix A shows examples of how the team is able to provide needs-based support.</p> <p>Appendix B gives an overview of how support was provided across 2023/24 with outcomes/success/impact.</p> <p>Funding for the 2024 – 25 academic year is currently being reviewed. Thoughts and questions will be welcomed and can be sent to rosie.lister@iow.gov.uk</p> <p><u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS</u></p> <p>Confirmed that there are 284 Children in Care, as of yesterday (20 March 24). Numbers fluctuate on a daily basis.</p> <p><u>What is learned through the impact identified?</u></p> <p>Information gathered informs how support will be rolled out to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Examples include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefit of daily reading and shared stories with children (supported through Dolly’s Books). • Use of VR headsets to enable children to take part in virtual school trips when they may not have been able to leave the Island or be away from support – impact on writing development and outcomes.
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p>	<p><u>2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING Paper C</u></p> <p>The forecast position for the 2023/24 DSG budget, at 31 January 2023 shows an expected overspend of £2.975m. IR noted that this is £2.407m higher than the deficit expected in the Safety Valve Plan. The greatest pressure continues to be in the High Needs area.</p> <p><u>EARLY YEARS BLOCK</u></p> <p>Minor variances are shown in the Early Years (EY) block. A reduction of £260,000 in funding followed the January 2023 Census, due to a decline in numbers. A further reduction is expected following analysis of the January 2024 Census and submission of Spring 2024 activity returns.</p> <p>It was noted that the Early Years Supplementary Grant will be rolled into the EY Block of the DSG from 2024/25.</p> <p><u>SCHOOLS BLOCK</u></p> <p>IR confirmed that there are no variances in this budget area, the majority of which is passported directly to schools. Only a small addition of £4,000 was due to Academy and Secondary School subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust (FFT).</p>

8.4	As reported in item 6.3, unspent funding for Trade Union Facilities Time, due to vacancies for representatives, will be returned to school budgets.
8.5	<u>HIGH NEEDS BLOCK</u>
	At 31 January 2024, the forecast overspend is expected to be £3.056m, which is 13.7% of the overall high needs budget. The main reason is increasing numbers of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and children with more complex needs. The IOW has one of the highest rates of children with EHCPs in the country.
8.6	<p>A significant budget gap of £569,000 was identified at the time of setting the 2023/24 budget and further pressures noted in para 10 of Paper C are anticipated –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £244,000 overspend in top-up funding for mainstream EHCPs. • Increased funding values per child of up to 10%, due to high complex needs (average 9%). • £355,000 overspend in discretionary top-up funding for children in mainstream schools who may otherwise be in independent placements. • £531,000 pressure in personal packages for Children Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS). Demand increased by 33% since April 2023. The average cost per package is £35,000. • £755,000 overspend on Independent and Non-Maintained School placements. Places have increased from 81 to 90 in the last year. Of these, off-Island placements has seen an increase from 12 to 18. • £390,000 overspend due to the Primary Behaviour Service being introduced earlier than expected. However, this will be partially offset by a saving of £226,000 on primary places that would have been needed at the Island Learning Centre (ILC). • Demand on secondary places at the ILC continues to increase, leading to an expected overspend of £97,000 – which may be subject to further pressure, following receipt of spring activity returns. • £90,000 overspend on Post-16 top up funding due to increasing demand and a rise in cost per student. • £145,000 overspend on top-up funding for special schools. Primary places at Medina House School increased to 104. 48% of children at the school are currently assessed at the highest Band – a 10% increase since 2022/23.
8.7	<p><u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS</u></p> <p>NC explained that Paper F was a late submission and will bring additional information on special needs placements.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that receipt of Safety Valve funding is reliant on progress against the plan.</p> <p>Confirmation was given that payment for 2023/24 has been received. LA Officers are working to re-profile the Safety Valve Plan to address pressures. Further information will be noted through Paper F .</p> <p>Concern was also raised that the £3m overspend may impact individual school budgets.</p> <p>Confirmation was given that the High Needs Block and Safety Valve are separate to the Schools Block, which is distributed for school budgets. IOW Officers have been in post for approx. 8 weeks and are focused on reviewing strategies, making changes</p>

	<p>at rapid pace to resolve issues. High Needs deficits are a national issue but members were assured that the IOW can succeed.</p>
8.8	<p><u>CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK</u></p> <p>An underspend of £37,000 is expected as there is currently only one non-SEN INMS placement.</p>
8.9	<p><u>OTHER GRANTS</u></p> <p>These grants are generally passported directly to schools. PE and Sports Grant will continue for 2024/25. The Maintained Schools Additional Grant will be rolled into the funding formula for 2024/25. Teachers' Pay Additional Grant will be rolled into the funding formula for 2025/26.</p>
8.10	<p><u>CUMULATIVE DEFICIT AND CARRY FORWARD</u></p> <p>The predicted deficit of £2.975m will be added to the £4.007m deficit carried forward, leading to and expected overall deficit of £6.982m. This is £2.93m higher than planned through the Safety Valve agreement.</p>
8.11	<p><u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS</u></p> <p>Confirmed that para 15 in Paper C should read '<i>The annual decision from Schools Forum on carrying forward the deficit is not required.</i>'</p>
8.12	<p><u>ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY 2023/24</u></p> <p>Additional funding of £40m was allocated to LAs in 2023/24 as a one-off payment to support schools in financial difficulty. There are no plans to continue this funding. LAs received £20m for maintained schools, special schools and nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs). £20m was allocated to academies.</p>
8.13	<p>The IWC received £517,000 towards supporting the elimination of deficit balances, which was allocated on a case-by-case basis using criteria outlined in para 21. Eligible schools are listed in the table at para 22.</p>
8.14	<p>A School Resource Management Advisor has been deployed to support schools with suggested actions.</p>
8.15	<p>Whilst alternative methods of distribution were considered, best value for the public purse was assured by following DfE method for allocation of funding to LAs. Eligible schools will receive the additional funding by 31 March 2024.</p>
8.16	<p><u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS</u></p> <p>HT Representatives noted that HTs were unhappy that the additional support had not been available for all schools who are struggling.</p> <p>It was also noted that it seems unfair that schools who are managing to balance their budget appear to be penalised for doing so.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2023/24 forecast position be noted. 2. That the approach for distribution of additional funding to support maintained schools in financial difficulty be supported.
9.	<p><u>2024/25 SCHOOL FUNDING</u> Paper D</p> <p>IR gave an overview of updates in relation to 2024/25 funding with additional information on the EY Central Team and budget, as requested at the last meeting.</p>

<p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p> <p>9.7</p> <p>9.8</p> <p>9.9</p>	<p><u>SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA</u></p> <p>Following political ratification and submission to DfE, budget shares were received by schools on 20 February 2024. As requested at the last meeting, final cash changes following Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) are shown in appendix A as a percentage of each individual school budget.</p> <p>Further information on schools' balances and budget plans will be given at the next SF meeting on 11 July 2024.</p> <p><u>EARLY YEARS FORMULA 2024/25</u></p> <p>There was no change to the formula proposals following consultation with providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-2's will be funded at base rate • 2 year old funding will include deprivation factors • 3 – 4 year old funding will include deprivation factors and quality supplements but no flexibility supplement <p>Indicative budget shares were released to providers on 22 February 2024. The table at para 7 in Paper D shows funding rates payable to providers. DSG adjustments will be subject to the outcome of the January 2024 census. Further censuses in summer and autumn 2024 will show actual take up of the new childcare entitlements for 2 year olds and under 2's to inform funding formula decisions.</p> <p>Members were informed that 40 of 76 EY providers replied to the consultation – approximately 10 replies were from schools with EY provision.</p> <p><u>EARLY YEARS CENTRAL TEAM</u></p> <p>Up to 5% of the EY budget can be retained for central services. SF members agreed the retention of 4% (£427,000) for 2024/25 at the last meeting on 18 January 2024. The table at para 10 in Paper D shows a breakdown of the structure of the central team, which accounts for 95% of the centrally retained budget.</p> <p>The remaining 5% covers EY Capita Licence fee, staff travel, training, insurance, and minor sundry supplies.</p> <p>AM left the meeting.</p> <p>The team supports all 76 EY providers. 93% of providers who operate from non-domestic premises have been judged good or outstanding. 92% of providers operating from domestic premises have also been judged good or outstanding.</p> <p>EY workstreams include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support with transition from EY provision to primary school. • advice and guidance to providers and reception school teachers. • specific training. • collection and analysis of data and business support. • written reports from safeguarding visits and annual audits for the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP). • attendance at Personal Education Plan review meetings. • collection of activity/census returns from providers to ensure correct funding is received.
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<p>9.10</p> <p>9.11</p> <p>9.12</p> <p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p> <p>10.7</p> <p>10.8</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL SCHOOL, PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT, RESOURCED PROVISIONS AND MAINSTREAM EHCP TOP UP FUNDING</u></p> <p>This funding area is for commissioned special places at onsite resourced provisions, the Island Learning Centre, Medina House and St Georges School. Top-up rates for these provisions and mainstream EHCPs has been increased by 2% for 2024/25.</p> <p>Discussion is ongoing to develop an Education Strategy for the Island. Further information on special education places is included in Paper F</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The general updates in relation to 2024/25 schools and early years related funding be noted. 2. That the 2024/25 top up funding rates for special schools, pupil referral units, resourced provisions and mainstream EHCPs be endorsed. <p><u>FUNDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL SPECIALIST PLACEMENTS WITHIN ISLE OF WIGHT MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS 2024/25</u> Paper F</p> <p>NC apologised for the late submission of this paper and explained how the new team of IOW Officers are working at speed to make necessary changes to address the long-term deficit and pressures in the High Needs budget.</p> <p>Currently, 61 children access discretionary funding for individual education packages at a cost of £1.1m and 65 children are EOTAS at a cost of £2.2m. Urgent action is needed to address the shortfall of SEND provision on the Island.</p> <p>Both mainstream special schools are at full occupancy and places are commissioned at St Catherine’s INMSS and other INMSS provisions on the mainland. Some children, who should be in a special school, are placed in mainstream schools.</p> <p>Funding principles for Resources Provisions (RPs) have not been reviewed for many years and are neither sufficient nor sustainable. It is proposed to expand SEND provision and to provide an improved education offer for EOTAs children.</p> <p><u>FUNDING FOR RESOURCED PROVISIONS</u></p> <p>Paper F outlines the current funding system for RPs, based on Age Weighted Pupil Unit (included in school budget), funding from the High Needs Block and Top-up funding linked to specific needs.</p> <p>It is proposed to fund RPs on a set rate for primary and for secondary schools, with new SLAs drawn up in line with DfE guidance. This will enable RPs to meet the needs of children and reduce pressure on schools and on the High Needs Block. The funding rate will apply to all children in the provision from 1 April and allow for increased capacity where needed.</p> <p>New RPs would be funded at full occupancy (agreed with the LA) for the first year, so that pupils can be placed in the provision without additional financial burden on the provision. The aim is to reduce the overall deficit in high needs over time, as SEND places become sufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>The banding system in place for assessment of children’s needs has been amended to make the wording more easily understood.</p> <p>It is proposed to set up satellite provisions for both special schools, which are at full capacity. These will also be funded at full occupancy for the first year. An initial plan is being developed for use of the Studio School site in East Cowes. Capital funding will be provided to support the proposals through the LA High Needs Capital Allocation.</p>
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10.9	NC also gave an overview of the range of support and tools that are already available to support schools with meeting the needs of SEND children.
10.10	<p><u>QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS</u></p> <p>SF Members agreed that the proposals would increase the deficit initially, in order to reduce pressure over time.</p> <p>It is important to increase special places on the Island, rather than increase the spend on more costly mainland placements.</p> <p>As the place planning strategy is developed – schools are likely to close. Members asked if buildings could be re-purposed for SEND provision.</p> <p>Additional spaces will be useful and can be considered. It is important initially, to share the message with parents so that they can understand why change is necessary.</p> <p>It was noted that the speed at which officers are working to make a difference has impressed HT's. A staggered intake approach, to ensure the more complex needs of children are met, will be welcomed.</p> <p>Members asked about the High Needs Capital Allocation.</p> <p>This is a small funding pot for key capital works. An example of use was toward the recent refurbishment of the Island Learning Centre to create more vocational options for students.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the funding will be sufficient for the proposals but, necessary to be creative and utilise other spaces where possible.</p> <p>Members asked how the high numbers of children with SEND in EY provision may be supported.</p> <p>Initial precedence must be on solving the issues in primary and secondary sectors to meet the Safety Valve Agreement but, EY provision will continue to be a priority.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>That proposals for the expansion, development and funding of additional specialist placements be endorsed.</p>

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – All meetings will be virtual through Teams.

Thursday, 11 July 2024 - 8.30am

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All at 8.30am

14 November 2024

16 January 2025

20 March 2025

SUB-GROUP MEETING

Week beginning 3 June 2024 (TBC)