

Surrey Schools Forum minutes of meeting Tuesday 14 May 2024 1pm on Teams

Approved by the Schools Forum at its meeting of 2 July 2024

Present

Chair

Jack Mayhew Learning Partners MAT Academy member

Joint Vice-Chairs

Kate Keane (from item 7) Ewell Grove Primary Primary Head
Justin Price Freemantles School Special school head

Other school and academy members:

Donna Harwood-Duffy Dorking Nursery school Maintained nursery school
rep

Clare McConnell Bisley Primary School Maintained primary Head

Zoe Johnson-Walker The Winston Churchill School Maintained secondary head

Nick Elliott NE secondary SSS Pupil referral unit head

Jo Vigar Charlwood Primary School Maintained primary governor

Chris Hamilton Portesbery School Maintained special school
governor

Ben Bartlett Hinchley Wood Learning
Partnership Academy member

Sir Andrew Carter South Farnham Educ Trust Academy member

Elaine Cooper SWAN academy trust Academy member

Jo Hastings Ottershaw Infant and Junior Academy member

Karyn Hing Westfield School Academy member

Kerry Oakley Carrington School Academy member

Sue Wardlow Greensand MAT Academy member

John Winter Weydon MAT Academy member

Non-school members

Sarah Porter Private, voluntary and independent nurseries

Folasadi Afolabi Unions: Education Joint Committee

Tamsin Honeybourne Unions: Education Joint Committee

Matthew Rixson Guildford Diocese (Church of England)

the impact of academy conversions, offset by underspends on various de-delegated services, partly where they had not been reduced in year for academy conversions.

Central schools services block

Central schools services block had been underspent by £0.282m, of which £100,000 was due to the allocation for Inclusion Innovation working group initiatives not being spent (funded indirectly by DSG). Carol Savedra proposed that this sum should be carried forward. These were school driven inclusion projects, partners had self funded the work done so far, but it was now necessary to look externally to deliver the remainder of the projects.

The Chair recalled previous Schools Forum discussions of, and support for, the

validation of numbers of pupils on SEN support, and funding based on numbers of pupils on SEN support could have unintended consequences.

Surrey had had a mechanism for distributing additional funding prior to 2021, but it ceased following concerns that it was not targeting the highest need schools.

One school had requested retrospective funding. Officers did not recommend support as there could be significant pressure on the budget if retrospective funding was considered.

Members noted that provision of additional SEND funding was not a decision for the Forum, but that the Forum could express a view.

Members noted that in infant schools there were often children who clearly needed an EHCP but who did not secure an EHCP until they had been in the school for some time, because of the need for the school to gather and submit evidence, via a
 , which could take most of year R.

Could this be taken into account in any funding distribution? Officers would consider the position of infant schools in modelling.

In January the Forum had agreed additional funding to support children in year R who had received additional support in nursery, where they clearly needed additional support but might not need it in the long term. This was to be implemented from

8 Falling rolls funding 2025/26

Mike Singleton presented this item. The majority of primary schools with falling rolls would not be eligible for support, because their pupil numbers were not expected to rise within the next 3-5 years. The report set out possible options for supporting eligible schools; a formula, specific costs, or a mixture. An example was shared of a planning area where one school had seen a drop in numbers which might be reversed over the next few years due to growth in the area.

It was noted that funding allocated for falling rolls was funding which could not be allocated through the main funding formula.

The Forum supported continuation of the existing special case of falling rolls funding (specific school relocated to new housing development).

The Forum supported preparation of proposals for more general use of falling rolls funding for the July meeting.

9 Proposal for additional exceptional premises factor for schools with listed buildings incurring disproportionate energy and maintenance costs (Reigate Priory Junior School)

Carrie Traill presented this item. The Forum was asked to support an application to the DfE for an exceptional premises factor to provide extra funding to a school occupying a listed building, from 2025/26 and retrospectively for 2024/25. Listed (optional) eligible exceptional premises factors. It had originally been intended that the school would be in a new building in September 2024. Part of the school was a grade 1 listed building, which was impractical for education. The listed status meant that any improvements in energy efficiency would be very expensive and, even then, the building would not be fit for

For other schools with costs that high we would be looking at capital works. A sum of £39k pa was proposed. If it was approved, DfE would fund through DSG in future years. The costs involved were revenue costs, unrelated to any capital works, and thus could not be capitalised.

The Chair noted that the sum requested was relatively small.

Members expressed concern at the potential for a continuing commitment and suggested that additional funding might reduce the urgency of moving the school. The future of the school depended on a Cabinet decision. It would be possible for the Forum to support for a limited period only (note: if approved, DFE would fund from 2026/27 anyway).

Officers had not identified any other grade 1 (or indeed grade 2) listed buildings occupied by Surrey schools, so the application would not set a precedent.

One member asked whether there was an opportunity to mitigate falling rolls by taking the listed building out of use. CT replied that there might be a surplus of one form of entry in the area, but this school had five, and a reduction of 1 form would not be sufficient for the listed building not to be required. Thus no change was not an option.

