

LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
20 JUNE 2019

Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), Steve Barnes (Head Teacher, The Pilgrim School, Lincoln), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Marilyn Bell (Governor, The Fenland Federation), Ian Randall (Head Teacher, Reepham Church of England Primary School), Rachel Barrett FCCA (Governor, North Kesteven Academy), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Ian Widdows (Head Teacher, Giles Academy, Old Leake), Mark Woods (Chief Executive Officer, Stamford Welland Academy), Gavin Booth (Head Teacher, Boston St Thomas' C E Primary School), Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy), Helen Hilton (Head Teacher, Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School), Martin Shelton (College Principal, Linkage Community Trust), Alison Hill (Area Manager, Paper Moon Day Nurseries) and Ken Rustidge (Staff Trade Unions).

Officers in attendance:-

Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sheridan Dodsworth (Children's Services Manager - responsibility for SEND), Geraldine O'Neill (Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)) and Martin Smith (Interim Assistant Director of Education).

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Gavin Booth be elected as the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2019/20.

GAVIN BOOTH IN THE CHAIR

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Steve Barnes be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2019/20.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Allison Sunley (Governor, Great Steeping Primary School), Martin J Kyle (Headteacher, St Faith & St Martin C E Primary School), Catherine Stratton (Headteacher, Saxilby C E Primary School), Michele Anderson (Headteacher, Spalding High School), Caroline Saxelby (Headteacher,

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Walton Girls' High School and Sixth Form, Grantham), David Scott, (Headteacher, Kesteven & Grantham Girls' School, Grantham), Lea Mason, (Executive Headteacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, Louth), Lynsey Norris (Faith Representative), Helen Stokes (Branch Secretary, UNISON) and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery).

4 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of members' interest made at this stage of proceedings.

5 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 24 January 2019 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that following the recent Lincolnshire Schools' Forum election, the newly elected representatives were:-

Primary Maintained - Headteacher – Mrs Catherine Stratton
 Primary Maintained – Governor – Ms Allison Sunley
 Special Academy – Headteacher – Mrs James Ellis (Member from 20 July 2019)
 Primary Academy – Headteacher - Mr Gavin Booth
 Primary Academy – Headteacher – Mr Simon Morley
 Primary Academy - Headteacher – Mrs Katie Grivil (Member from 20 July 2019)
 Secondary Academy – Governor – Mrs Rachel Barrett

The Committee was advised further that there were still some governor vacancies to be filled, and that arrangements for a future election would be considered.

The Chairman highlighted that for four members of the Forum, their term of office was due to come to an end on 19 July 2019, and that this meeting would therefore be their last meeting.

On behalf of the Forum, the Chairman extended thanks to Nigel Sisley (Special School Maintained Governor), Marilyn Bell (Primary Maintained Governor), Helen Hilton (Primary Academy Headteacher) and Lea Mason (Special Academy Headteacher) for their contribution and support to the Forum.

7 SECTION 251 BUDGET STATEMENT 2019/20

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager Schools Finance Team, which provided a copy of the Section 251 budget statement for the 2019/20 financial year.

The Forum noted that the Local Authority (LA) was required under Section 251 of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to prepare and submit an education and children's social care budget statement for the relevant period to the Secretary of State for Education (DfE) by 30 April each year. The Forum noted further that the Section 251 return was intended to provide a clear picture of the LA's planned spending on its schools budget, de-delegated items; high needs budget, early year's budget, central provision within the schools budget, and children and young people's services.

It was reported that the information for 2019/20 had been submitted to the DfE via its collection and management system for education. It was reported further that the LA, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements published the Early Years report, the LA table report and the Schools Table report in the 'Downloads' section of the LCC's website.

The report presented highlighted that for 2019/20, the Dedicated Schools Grant comprised of four blocks: the Schools Block, Central Schools Services Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block, with each block having been determined by a separate national funding formula. It was highlighted further that the Schools Block continued to be ring-fenced and that LA's were only able to transfer 0.5% of their Schools Block funding to an alternative block, following consultation with all schools and academies and the approval of the Schools Forum. No budget transfer was planned for in 2019/20 from the Schools Block in Lincolnshire's funding arrangements.

Attached to the report at Appendix A was a copy of the Schools Funding arrangements for 2019/20. The table provided an overall picture of the funding being allocated direct to schools and high needs delegations, and the amount being spent on education centrally and children's social care. The Forum was taken through the details shown in Appendix A. The percentages of funding devolved to schools through each of the blocks were detailed within the main body of the paper on page 14.

The Forum was advised that for 2019/20 Lincolnshire had received c.£5.776m of protection funding following the implementation of the government's new High Needs national funding formula to provide stability against its existing funding level. The Forum was advised further that the government had also responded to national concerns over the increasing costs to support growth and increased complexity of young people requiring additional support; Lincolnshire had received a one-off allocation of £1.533m to its High Needs Block in 2019/20.

It was reported that this was the final year of the four year funding settlement for 2019/20; and that funding levels from 2020/21 were subject to the government's next spending review. The Forum was advised that officers from the Education Skills Funding Agency had indicated an announcement on schools funding for 2020/21 would not be known until the Autumn of 2019 at the earliest.

A concern was expressed regarding future fairer funding levels for Lincolnshire. Officers advised that they continued to lobby the government for fairer funding and

for greater certainty and predictability in funding. It was highlighted that maintained schools had been advised that where overspends were forecast they were to contact the LA to enable next steps to be considered; and that maintained schools were encouraged to review benchmarking data including the supplementary requirements within the revised Schools Financial Value Standard.

One member enquired whether the LA was aware of the financial position of Academies. It was outlined that the LA did not have a list of academy school balances available, since they were reported directly to the Education & Skills Funding Agency who were the responsible body. It was highlighted that the LA was not aware that they were published in a single document; however they were reported in each academy Trust's financial statements.

RESOLVED

That the Section 251 Budget Statement for 2019/20 be noted.

8 ANNUAL REPORT ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Consideration was given to a report from Sheridan Dodsworth, Children's Services Manager, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), which provided the Forum with an annual update on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as required by the Schools' Forum Regulations.

The report provided the Forum with an update on activity within the county; an overview of the high needs costs throughout 2018/19; an update on mediation, tribunals and the SEND National Trial for Single Route of Redress; an update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision strategy; and a summary of the Local Area Ofsted/CQC Inspection.

In guiding the Forum through the report, the Children's Services Manager, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities made reference to:

- The National Context – The Forum was advised that in January 2019 there had been 354,000 children and young people (0-25) in England with an EHC Plan, this had been an increase of 32,400 (11%) from January 2018;
- The Lincolnshire Context – The Forum noted that in January 2019 there had been 106,488 pupils on roll in Lincolnshire's maintained and academy schools; of these 16.16% were in receipt of some form of provision for their SEN requirements. It was reported that unlike the rise in England, the number receiving SEN support had dropped from 13% to 12.9% in Lincolnshire; and that there had been more pupils with an EHC Plan, this figure had increased from 2.8% in 2018 to 3.26% in 2019;
- Activity 0-25 years - It was reported that there were 4,654 children and young people (0-25) with an EHC Plan; and that this had been a 2% increase from January 2018. Full details relating to the activity for 0-25 years was shown on page 24 of the report. Page 25 of the report provided details relating to

placements for young people; and a table at the bottom of page 26 provided a breakdown of EHC Plans by Age Group;

- It was highlighted that SEND remained more prevalent in boys than girls; and that in Lincolnshire, 16.09% of boys were on SEN support compared to 9.64% of girls;
- The Forum was advised that Lincolnshire was consistent with the national trend of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) being the most commonly identified primary need overall. It was noted that Lincolnshire was higher in overall percentage of pupils with MLD at SEN Support, 30.97% compared to 24% of all pupils with SEN Support for MLD nationally. It was highlighted that in Lincolnshire MLD had increased from 29.7% to 30.97%;
- Annual reviews – The Forum noted that the number of Annual reviews out of timescale had reduced; however, at the start of the academic year 2018/19 there was still around 400 reviews to process. It was noted further that this backlog was growing, and that the service was currently reviewing the capacity required ensuring that all elements of the SEND process were legally compliant. It was highlighted that no additional funding had been allocated to LAs from central government to respond to the growing demands on the LA functions of SEN administration, assessment, co-ordination and monitoring. The Forum was advised that it was a credit to Lincolnshire schools that they continued to undertake the Annual Reviews and alert the LA of any significant changes in a child's needs;
- Special Schools – The Forum noted that a comprehensive review of Special Schools' pupil banding had been undertaken with Special School Leaders and that these changes had come into effect from 2018/19;
- Independent Non-Maintained Specialist Provision (Out of County) – It was reported that the number of Out of County placements had reduced over the last four years, and as at January 2019 there were 86 placements. The Forum was also advised that in addition to Out of County placements in January 2019, there had been 44 children and young people placed in independent schools in Lincolnshire. Overall, the net financial position on specialist placements made was broadly in line with the budget;
- High Needs Block funding – It was reported that in 2019/20, the government was committed to providing LAs a minimum 1% gain per head of population from their baseline in 2017/18. It was highlighted that in 2019/20, Lincolnshire was in receipt of £41 per pupil (or £5.776m) of protection funding when comparing the new national funding formula allocation to Lincolnshire's current High Needs block spending. It was highlighted that one-off monies for High Needs announced by the Secretary of State in December 2018 in recognition to the financial challenges being experienced by LA had equated to funding of £1.533m for Lincolnshire;
- It was highlighted that the DfE had launched a 'call for evidence' exercise on SEN funding, which the LA had encouraged schools to contribute to;
- Mediation, Tribunals and the SEND National Trial – The Forum was advised that families had a right to appeal against decisions made by the LA in relation to: a refusal to assess; a refusal to issue a EHC Plan; the content of a EHC plan or the identified educational setting. The Forum was advised further that Lincolnshire had been successful in resolving a number of issues

through mediation; and that in 2018, only 20% of families that has chosen to go to mediation then went on to lodge an appeal to the First Tier Tribunal. It was highlighted that this had significantly dropped from 2017, when 56% of families lodged an appeal to Tribunal after mediation. The Forum was advised that so far in 2018/19 there had been 40 referrals for mediation (33 had gone ahead); of these only eight had been in relation to 'refusal to assess' and 28 had been in respect of the decision not to issue an EHC Plan.

The Forum was advised that a two-year National Trial had begun on 3 April 2018, which extended the powers of the SEND Tribunal. It was noted that the new trial gave parents and young people new rights to request recommendations about health and social care needs and provision specified in EHC plans, in addition to the educational aspects, when making a SEND appeal. Details relating to the policy aims of the trial and the number of appeals lodge under the Single Route of Redress were shown on pages 34 and 35 of the report;

- Building Communities of Specialist Provision – The Forum noted that since the last annual report the 'Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy had been approved by the Executive in November 2018, which would be implemented over the next five years. It was noted that once fully implemented, the strategy would provide for an integrated schools system where children and young people got the right health care and education, in the right place, at the right time, and as close as possible to where they lived; and
- Local Area SEND Inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission - The Forum was advised that the LA had been delighted with the outcome of the SEND Area Inspection, as it had recognised the many strengths within the county; and the commitment by all partners to identify and meet the needs of this vulnerable group of young people.

During discussion, the following comments were raised:

- Was there any reason why there were more EHC plans in Lincolnshire, and what was the growth area of SEND type of need, and whether there was any comparable statistical neighbourhood data? The Forum was advised that it was difficult to compare with neighbours, as the data varied and was not always comparable. The LA was aware of the increases in the previous year and the areas with the largest growth areas were in early years and 5-10 year olds. It was highlighted that further details would be shared with the Forum before the October meeting;
- One member highlighted that more early year pupils were now attending for longer; and whether there was access to any funding support. Officers advised that this was an area that was currently being looked into; and
- Whether there was enough Educational Psychologists. The Forum was advised that there was a shortage and that the LA was currently using locums.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities presented be noted.

9 ANNUAL REPORT FOR EARLY YEARS

The Forum received a report from Michelle Andrews, Children's Services Manager, Early Years, which provided the Forum with the Annual Report for Early Years and information on the delivery and performance of Early Years and Childcare across Lincolnshire.

In guiding the Forum through the report, Geraldine O'Neill, Lead Consultant – Early Years Entitlement, reference was made to:-

- The six key areas of responsibility for Early Years and Childcare Support;
- The Early Years Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 years olds. The Forum was advised that all three and four year olds were entitled to 15 hours a week free early learning. It was reported that take up for this entitlement was currently at 95% nationally and 97% in Lincolnshire;
- Two Year Old Early Education Entitlement – It was highlighted that Lincolnshire had seen a decrease in the number of children potentially eligible based on lists produced by the Department of Work and Pensions. It was highlighted further that as at the spring term 2019, Lincolnshire's take-up was at 80% with 2,093 children accessing a funded place. The take-up nationally was 72%. It was noted that the number of Early Years providers delivering funded 2 year old places continued to rise and currently there was 580 providers registered to deliver 2 year old places in Lincolnshire, which represented 85% of all providers delivering free education places to 3 and 4 year olds;
- Early Years Pupil Premium - It was reported that Early Years Pupil Premium was additional funding for providers to improve the education they provided for disadvantaged three and four years olds;
- Disability Access Funding – The Forum was advised that for 2018/19, a total of 157 children had qualified for disability access funding in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority continued to encourage providers to seek parent's permission to check eligibility for this additional funding to maximise take-up;
- 30 Hours Entitlement – It was reported that currently 96% of children were accessing a place in Lincolnshire; and that this exceeded the national take-up of 92%; and the East Midlands Regional take-up of 93%. Additionally, 95% of childcare providers in Lincolnshire were offering the extended 30 hours entitlement;
- Monthly Payments – The Forum was advised that Lincolnshire had successfully implemented a monthly payment system from September 2018, following consultation with the sector. It was noted that feedback from the sector regarding the new payments system had been very positive; and that the system was helping to support providers to manage their budgets more effectively;
- Sufficient and Sustainable Early Years and Childcare Provision – The Forum was advised that a sufficiency audit undertaken by the local authority in 2017

had demonstrated that Lincolnshire was in a strong position to meet the needs of families and that there was sufficient capacity within the market place to meet the needs. As the audit had not taken into account parental choice, a parental survey had been undertaken; details of which were shown on page 45 of the report;

- Quality Provision/Educational Outcomes – Details the Early Years Foundation (EYFS) Stage Profile outcomes and profiles were shown on pages 45 to 49 of the report. It was noted Lincolnshire had achieved in its EYFS data a score of 69.1%, which was lower than the national average of 71.5%, in addition Lincolnshire was slightly wider than national figures for the lowest attaining 20% of children. It was noted further that a development plan was being produced to improve the performance amongst this age group;
- Quality of Provider Judged by Ofsted – The Forum was advised that 97% of Early Years and Childcare providers in Lincolnshire had achieved a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Judgement, which was 2% higher than national average. The Forum was advised further that Lincolnshire's maintained Nursery Schools had continued to achieve very strong Ofsted outcomes with three schools being graded as 'Outstanding' and the remaining two schools being graded as 'Good';
- Workforce and Professional Development - It was reported that Early Years Child Care was continuing to support the development of the early years and childcare workforce across Lincolnshire. Full details of the training provided were shown on pages 51 and 52 of the report;
- Inclusion and Early Intervention – The Forum was advised that there were 317 children accessing Early Years Inclusion Fund. The Forum noted that the process for Inclusion Funding enabled children with lower emerging SEND to access universal early year's provision;
- Details of the Early Years Budget was shown on page 55 of the report; and
- Details of the Early Years and Childcare Support – Key Priorities for 2019/20 were shown on page 56 of the report.

During discussion, the following comments were raised:-

- A question was raised that Lincolnshire had high performing providers, and that this did not correlate with the EYFS outcomes – why this was so? It was highlighted further that Boston district had a low good level of development – as resource being targeted to more deprived areas in terms of LA support, or were there particular reasons for this. It was reported that further details would be provided to the forum before the October meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Report for Early Years be noted.
2. That the priorities for Early Years and Childcare for 2019/20 as detailed on page 56 of the report be received.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services presented the Academies and Trust update report, which provided information on the latest number of academies, pupils in academies and academy trusts.

It was highlighted that since the effective date of the last report (1 January 2019), there had been two further academy conversions of primary schools, which meant that 35.9% (101) of primary schools were now academies, which represented 45.4% (26,115) of primary pupils.

Information relating to the projected six month status of all Lincolnshire State Schools was provided on pages 60 and 61 of the report presented.

The report also provided a list of the academy trust that currently had the greatest number of academies in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

That the Academies and Trust update be noted.

11 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum gave consideration to its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be noted.

12 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED

That the following dates for future meeting of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum be agreed:-

Thursday 16 January 2020 at 1.00pm;
Thursday 23 April 2020 at 1.00pm;
Thursday 18 June 2020 at 1.00pm; and
Thursday 8 October 2020 at 1.00pm.

The meeting closed at 2.23 pm