

# SCHOOLS' MANAGEMENT FORUM – MIDDLESBROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL EMERGENCY MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023 AT 8:30AM

### PRESENT:

<b>Maintained Primary School Representatives</b>	
<b>Primary Academy Representative</b>	
Helen Steele (Chair)	Caldicotes Primary Academy (in part)
Adam Cooper (Vice Chair)	Abingdon Primary School (Legacy Learning Trust)
Jackie Walsh	Green Lane Primary Academy (Legacy Learning Trust)
Emma Watson	The Avenue Primary (Lingfield Education Trust)
Joanne Smith	Breckon Hill Primary School (Legacy Learning Trust)
Sarah Lymer	CEO, Legacy Learning Trust
<b>Maintained School Governor Representative</b>	
<b>Maintained Special School Representative</b>	
Susan Robinson	Priory Woods
<b>PRU Representatives</b>	
Leanne Chilton	River Tees Multi-Academy Trust
<b>Secondary Academy Representatives</b>	
Michael Laidler	Acklam Grange (Legacy Learning Trust)
<b>Local Authority Officers</b>	
Rob Brown	Director of Education and Partnerships
Karen Smith	Head of Achievement
Trevor Dunn	Head of Access to Education
James Glover	Trainee Accountant
Dianne Nielsen	Delivering Better Value DBV Lead
Caroline Cannon	Strategic Lead for Inclusion
Alison Wood	
<b>Also Present</b>	
Amy Douglas	Governance Professional (Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Jackie Lowe	Observer
Louise Davies	Observer
Lisa Taylor	Observer
<b>1.</b>	<b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>
	The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
2.1	Apologies had been submitted in advance of the meeting from the following members of Schools' Management Forum (SMF): Mary Brindle, Anita Jefferies and Julia Rodwell.
2.2	RESOLVED to consent to the absence of the above-named members of SMF.
<b>3.</b>	<b>DISAPPLICATION UPDATE</b>
3.1	<b>Purpose</b>
3.1.1	At the previous meeting of SMF, members had not approved the local authority's request to transfer 0.5% from the Individual Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Subsequently, the local authority (LA) had submitted a disapplication request to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

	<p>Following the request, the ESFA had asked the LA to provide further details to SMF of how the transfer of funding would be used to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those requiring alternative provision. The current emergency had been arranged accordingly.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Reason for Transfer</b></p>
3.2.1	<p>To support the growing pressures which schools and children and young people at risk of exclusion or suspension were facing, the proposal was to use the 0.5% transfer to provide support to all primary and secondary schools by commissioning a specialist provider (school/academy) to further strengthen and enhance the existing outreach offer, linked to inclusion. This would provide a resource intensive targeted intervention for up to 60 children and young people at risk of exclusion or suspension, or who had been excluded, across an academic year. This would be delivered via a commissioned outreach offer for all schools in the area. This way of working would promote integration, reduce exclusions and suspensions by further providing resources, and support schools with professionals targeting children and young people presenting the highest level of need. This was in line with the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme of ensuring greater inclusion within mainstream settings.</p>
3.2.2	<p>A further proposal was to provide targeted intervention and the sharing of good practice between schools through peer-to-peer support within mainstream settings. There would be a focus on working with secondary schools who had a low number of permanent exclusions, by a commissioned service to deliver collaboration between mainstream schools to promote integration. This model would provide up to 20 offsite intervention places. Through this work children and young people would be supported to transition back into their mainstream setting and staff would meet the needs of those children or young people who were at risk of exclusion prior to the target intervention. This model would support greater inclusion and reduce the number of children who were excluded.</p>
3.2.3	<p>The funding would be allocated in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £300k Commissioning specialist provider enhanced outreach provision,</li> <li>- £400k Targeted intervention places for secondary school pupils.</li> </ul>
3.2.4	<p>SMF were asked to reconsider and vote on a proposal to transfer 0.5% (circa £700k) from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block in 2024-25. If agreed, the funding would support the proposed initiatives listed above.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
3.3.1	<p>SMF to note and advise if they supported the content of the intervention work proposed in the report.</p>
3.3.2	<p>SMF to vote on the transfer of 0.5% from the DSG Schools' Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Discussion/Challenge</b></p>
3.4.1	<p>SMF members were aware that suspensions in Middlesbrough were amongst the highest in the country, and this had a significant impact on budgets. The LA wished to work in partnership with schools and stressed the importance of SMF having access to sufficient detail to ensure schools were supportive of the proposals.</p> <p><i>Helen Steele withdrew from the meeting.</i></p>
3.4.2	<p><b>Following a request from SMF members</b>, Caroline Cannon confirmed that the LA had school level data on numbers of suspensions and permanent exclusions by school. The information would be circulated to the group following the meeting. <b>ACTION: LA</b></p>

3.4.3	<p><b>SMF noted that a report shared at the last meeting had included detail of next steps if the recommendations had not been approved. SMF sought clarity on the outcome of the current meeting if the recommendations were not approved on this occasion.</b> Representatives from the LA advised that following the last meeting, at which SMF had not approved the request to transfer 0.5% from the DSG Schools' Block to the High Needs Block, the LA had approached the ESFA and had begun the disapplication process. The ESFA had recommended that further information be shared with SMF on how the 0.5% would be used to support children and young people. If SMF were not in favour of the recommendations, the disapplication process would continue, but the LA stressed the importance of gaining the support of schools rather than imposing decisions on them.</p>
3.4.4	<p><b>SMF asked whether the proposals in the report had been based on a successful model that had worked elsewhere, and noted that all schools would need to agree to work together for the proposals to be successful.</b> The LA advised of the outreach and inclusion model that had been developed in Middlesbrough which had achieved a positive impact. Rates of permanent exclusions and suspensions, whilst still high, would have been even higher without the model. Some schools had very successful inclusion models and the LA wanted to use that best practice to further support schools across the local area.</p>
3.4.5	<p><b>SMF noted the potential impact on individual schools of utilising their staff and resources to support other schools.</b></p>
3.4.6	<p><b>SMF sought assurances on whether all schools in the borough were in support of the proposals, and asked for confirmation that secondary Headteachers had been consulted with and had confirmed their commitment.</b> The LA advised that they had not consulted with individual schools to seek agreement on the model. However, a task group had been facilitated with several secondary Headteachers to discuss how the LA could support them to reduce permanent exclusions and suspensions.</p>
3.4.7	<p><b>SMF noted the importance of attracting experienced professionals to support the proposed model and asked whether funding had been committed to secure strong staff.</b> The LA advised that there was a potential overspend of £3m and there was no additional funding to support the proposals. To achieve impact throughout the borough, a collective decision was required on the best use of funding relating to all provision. The DBV programme had identified the areas of priority to reduce pressures on the budget, including ensuring more children were reintegrated to mainstream settings where their needs could be met.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Voting on the Recommendation to Transfer 0.5% from the DSG Schools' Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25</b></p> <p>As the meeting was held virtually, SMF members were asked to indicate, via the 'chat' function, their approval of the recommendation. The majority of members who voted were in favour of the recommendation.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>SMF voted in favour of transferring 0.5% from the DSG Schools' Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25.</p>

*Meeting closed at 8:55am.*