

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM

10 December 2015

PRESENT:

Ken Childs – Special School Governor
Steve Haigh – Secondary Academy Heads
Sarah Diggle – Primary Governor
Chris Richardson – Maintained Secondary Heads
Mustafaa Malik – Primary Heads
Ethel Mills – PVI Sector
Steve Williamson – PRU
Matt Younger – Primary Heads
Allan Symons – Primary Governors
Jim Thomson – Secondary Academy Heads
Cllr Malcolm Brain – Gateshead Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Carole Smith – Corporate Resources
Frank McDermott – Corporate Resources
Alan Foster – Corporate Resources
Jeanne Pratt – Care Wellbeing and Learning
Ann Muxworthy – Care Wellbeing and Learning
Rosalyn White – Corporate Services and Governance

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Largue, Christine Ingle, Denise Henry, Clive Wisby, Jane Bryant, Elaine Pickering and Julie Goodfellow.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

3. EMTAS DE-DELEGATION OPTIONS

The Forum received a report requesting consideration be given to the de-delegation of EMTAS for mainstream maintained schools.

It was noted that staffing levels have been trimmed in light of budget cuts, however this is at a time of growth. There are currently 350 pupils supported by the services, speaking over 80 different languages. The service supports the education achievement of all ethnic minority and Traveller pupils across all Gateshead schools. It also supports training with schools on essential policies such as Hate Crime and to promote cultural awareness.

In terms of growth it was confirmed that there is further commitment required from January, following an increase in asylum seekers. A recent evaluation showed 100% satisfaction rate, with 85% of the responses rating the service good or very good. Despite this satisfaction rate the service will be re-evaluating how the service is provided.

It was noted that the service goes where the need is, all over Gateshead, and will further develop from January when more schools will need access to specialist services.

It was questioned how many responses were received to the satisfaction survey. It was confirmed that there were 19 responses, however a full evaluation of the responses has not yet been completed. It was suggested that some of the primary clusters do not think that the service is effective and due to the service being stretched schools feel that it is diluted in terms of what they get. It was noted that this information was not received back through the satisfaction survey. It was also acknowledged that the service is meeting the needs of pupils in different ways and certain schools take up more resource so some work is more thinly spread. It was pointed out that if the service was removed there would likely leave 500-700 children with no specialist support.

In terms of primary schools survey responses, it was noted that patchy information has been received as not all schools receive the service. However, it has been made clear to some of the primary representatives that schools are not sure what they will get and are not aware of other things that EMTAS are doing.

It was suggested that with the increasing number of languages in Gateshead schools more should be done to support schools to help themselves and support their own needs. It was confirmed that there is a 'talk package' in place that allows schools to support delivery and those schools with a high percentage of BME pupils are already able to deliver support. It was pointed out that Headteachers have a high expectation and the service needs to make it clear, through communications with schools, what they can deliver.

It was noted that delaying a decision on de-delegation of EMTAS would impact on staffing and contracts for some staff end before January. It was felt that the implications of not keeping the service would be severe, however the Forum agreed that termly reports be brought to future meetings around the work of the service.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the feedback from mainstream maintained primary schools be noted and service update reports be brought back to the Schools Forum on a termly basis.
 - (ii) That the Schools Forum, by majority vote,

agreed to the de-delegation of funds to continue with EMTAS service.

4. DE-DELEGATION OPTIONS

The Forum received a report requesting consideration be given to the further de-delegation of the Primary Behaviour Support Team and the Primary Fair Access Educational Psychologist.

It was reported that, in terms of behaviour support, discussions have been held with a number of Headteachers who use the service for more than two pupils. During these discussions issues were raised around communications and lack of clarity, therefore the services has changed accordingly. All staff have been provided with an ipad so they can feedback from schools on a daily basis, there is also now more clarity in terms of the role of teachers and teaching assistants and in particular what the service expects of the school.

More training is being rolled out to ensure more seamless approach for those pupils who need additional support. There has also been an increase in the number of permanent exclusions so work has been undertaken with primary schools around how children can be supported through early intervention.

It was noted that over 50% of primary schools use the behaviour support service, there were 54 cases last year, of which; 46 improved their behaviour, four were placed in specialist provision, two in the ARMS, one child returned to school action following a managed move and one child received a single plan. It was confirmed that an annual report is sent to all schools.

In terms of the Primary Fair Access Panel Educational Psychologist it was confirmed that 60 pupils have been referred to the Primary Fair Access Panel. 53 of these were appropriate referrals, 12 of whom received support from the educational psychologist. It was confirmed that every cluster is represented at the panel.

Currently work is ongoing to look at a model to support schools and build bespoke training to meet the needs of individual children.

The Schools Forum felt that it was positive that early intervention work was ongoing in primary schools. The Schools Forum was satisfied with a two year process in order to see patterns of impact and felt that a good level of information was provided to schools.

RESOLVED - That the feedback from mainstream maintained primary schools be noted and agreed the de-delegation of funds to continue with the Primary Fair Access Educational Psychologist and the Primary Behaviour Support Team special needs assistants.

5. EARLY YEARS FUNDING EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF 30 HOURS

A report was presented on the application for Gateshead to be an early implementer for the 30 hours free entitlement. It was noted that there will be no funding attached to this, however it will provide an opportunity to work on the admission process. It was also recognised that it is likely the children who may need the additional hours will not meet the criteria.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and the information in the application form.

6. AUTUMN STATEMENT UPDATE

The Schools Forum received an update on the issues coming out of the Chancellors Autumn Statement that will impact on Early Years, Schools and High Needs Blocks of the DSG.

In relation to the Early Years Block it was noted that there will be an additional £300M to fund the increase to 30 hours free entitlement for working parents. As of yet there is no detail on what Gateshead's rates will be, however new rates will be based on information collected by the DfE on the cost of childcare.

The core schools budget in England will be protected and it is expected that a national funding formula will be introduced in 2017/18. Government has also expressed its intention to help all secondary schools to become academies.

It is not expected that there will be a change to the High Needs Block for 2016/17, however, a national funding formula will be introduced from 2017/18, following consultation during 2016/17. An additional £50M has been pledged for capital works for all early years settings.

It was queried what will happen to PFI when the national funding formula is introduced. It was noted that there is talk of top slicing DSG, but there will be no further information until the Government consult on proposals early in 2016.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

7. GROWTH FUND APPLICATION

The Forum received a report outlining a recent application for Growth Funding that did not satisfy all of the criteria, and therefore a request was made for funding outside of the criteria.

It was reported that Ravensworth Terrace admitted above its planned admission number in anticipation of a new build school. However, this

increase was 6% and is therefore below the 10% threshold contained in the Growth Fund Criteria.

The Schools Forum felt that the adverse impact on other schools in the area was not considered at the time of admitting the additional pupils and therefore alternatives to managing the situation had not been considered.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum decided Growth Funding was not applicable in this situation.

8. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

A report was presented outlining the revisions to Gateshead's Scheme for Financing Schools. The Forum was asked for any views prior to consultation with all maintained schools.

RESOLVED - That the Forum reviewed the changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools prior to the Scheme being sent out to all maintained schools.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum was advised that Carolyn Duffy, RC primary school representative, has resigned from the Forum and is replaced by Andrew Ramanandi.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14 January 2016 at 10.00am.