

EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 12 September 2025

MEMBERS

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Parkside Primary)
Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)
Vicky Anderson (Catsfeld CEP School)

Primary Governors

Robert French (Weald Federation)

Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)
Caroline Barlow (Heathfield Community College)

Secondary Governor

Allan Pinner (Uckfield College)

Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)
Sam Cornelius (University of Brighton Academies Trust)
Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)-Chair
Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)

Special Academy

Jonty Clarke (Beckmead Trust)

Pupil Referral Unit

Neil Miller (LSEAT)

Non School Members

Justin Wynne (Trade Union representative)
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)
Hannah Caldwell (Post 16 East Sussex College Group)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Carolyn Fair (Director of children services)

Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education
Nathan Caine (H of Ed SEND & Safeguarding)
Honor Green (Head of Finance for Children's Services & Schools)
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)
Edward Beale (Finance Manager - Education and Schools)
Kirsten Coe (Finance Manager - Reporting and Systems)
Sarah Allen (Clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies (Note)

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

Welcome to Jonty Clark (Special Academies) and Caroline Barlow (Maintained Schools Secondary Phase) to their first Schools Forum meeting.

Apologies have been received from:

Allan Pinner

Emily Winslade

Richard Blakeley

2 Agenda Item 2: Minutes Of Previous Meeting 11 July 2025(Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

3. Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising and Declaration of Interests (Discussion)

3.1 Matters arising - none

3.2 Declaration of interest -none

4. Agenda Item 4: De Delegation-Honor Green (Approval)

4.1 Recommendations:

This paper set the rationale for continued de-delegation of specific services and for restoring de-delegated budgets from secondary schools for those services previously

not de-delegated. Information about the services, and the implications of any cessation of provision, were explained.

The Primary and Secondary maintained Schools' Forum Representatives were asked to decide which services should be provided centrally by the Authority for 2026/27.

4.2 Comments:

There were no comments.

Members were requested to vote on De delegation. Results as below:

	Primary		Secondary	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Contingency	3	0	3	0
Administration of FSM	3	0	3	0
Jury Service and union business	3	0	3	0
Behaviour Support Service	3	0	0	3
Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils	3	0	0	3
Headteacher Partnership	3	0	3	0

5. Agenda Item 5 - High Needs Funding Update -Nathan Caine (Information Only)

5.1 Recommendation:

Nathan Caine provided an update on the current position with the High Needs Block (HNB) in respect of identified pressures.

The East Sussex Schools' Forum representatives noted the implications of costs for maintaining the current level of placements in special schools and the risks associated with this for broader school budgets.

5.2 Comments:

Member noted that significant work has been done to support maintained schools in their provision for pupils with the aim of reducing reliance on the independent sector.

It was highlighted that many of these measures are new and their impact has yet to be seen.

The member emphasised that initiative would take time to embed and while Q1 outcomes may not appear strong, the trend could improve over time.

It was expressed that reducing resources available to school's risks limiting their ability to provide mainstream provision, creating a negative cycle. It was suggested that immediate action should be delayed until the impact of current measures can be properly assessed.

Members highlighted that schools of all sizes are facing considerable funding pressures.

It was noted that limited availability of alternative provision has led schools to create provision internally from existing budgets. It was emphasised that continually drawing from the same budget is unsustainable.

6. Agenda Item 6 - NJC Pay Award 2025.25 Update- Hannah Grevatt/ Melanie Funnell (Information Only)

6.1 Recommendation

Hannah and Melanie Informed the schools forum members of upcoming changes to the single status pay scale resulting from the NJC pay award.

It was noted the impact of the deletion of single status 2 from 1 April 2026.

It was also noted the proposed course of action being taken to review and address the impact on recruitment and retention.

6.2 Comments

It was noted that there was a clear link between the rising cost of support staff and the need to provide for high need students.

AOB

No AOB

Meeting concluded at 09:01

Next Meeting -to be held Friday 14th November