

## EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 15 November 2024

---

### MEMBERS

#### Primary

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

#### Primary Governors

Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School)

#### Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)  
Helen Key (Chailey School)

#### Secondary Governor

Monica WhiteHead (Claverham Community College)

#### Special School

Vacancy

#### 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

Kirsty Prawanna (Glyne Gap)

#### Pupil Referral Unit

Neil Miller (LSEAT)

#### Non School Members

Phil Clarke (Trade Union representative)  
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)  
Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)  
Hannah Caldwell (Post 16 East Sussex College Group)

#### ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)  
Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education  
Nathan Caine (H of Ed SEND & Safeguarding)  
Honor Green (BSD Finance)  
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools Accountant)  
Edward Beale (Finance Manager - Education and Schools)  
Kirsten Coe (Funding 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.

Peter Hughes

Joanna Sanchez - (Paul Barber attended as a substitute)

Helen Key- (Sara Marshallsay attended as a substitute)

Debra Vice Holt - (No longer governor)

## **2 Agenda Item 2: Minutes Of Previous Meeting 20 September 2024 (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: High needs block - Interblock transfer request-Nathan Caine (Approval)**

### **4.1 Recommendations:**

Recommendations were made in relation to the High Needs Funding, the LA's current forecast financial position and the request for an inter block transfer from the Schools Block.

### **4.3 Comments:**

It was asked what the spend of the INMS is for East Sussex and what is the percentage of that spend compared to the high needs budget overall? - We spend over a quarter of high needs budget (£22m) on around 500 children.

Is there a strategy to either bring children back into mainstream education or prevent further movement to independent schools?

Our approach is on exploring a range of strategies aimed at reducing the demand for independent school places. There are multiple challenging factors, including a high number of independent special schools, with visible availability that is contributing to increased demand.

Efforts are being made to boost parental confidence in mainstream schools. There are plans to expand facilities within mainstream schools to provide a more specialised offer for children and young people.

A query was raised as to what communication will be cascaded to schools regarding this matter. We will further consider how we disseminate information in relation to the High Needs Block.

The question regarding why funds are not being taken from the early year's budget was raised. The matter is still under consideration. There has been an increase in the offer for disadvantaged 2-year-olds, but the impact of the regulatory changes and the uptake of the offer are still unclear. If there is any remaining balance at the end of the year, it may be necessary to utilise that budget.

A point was raised regarding when the money will be returned to schools if the settlement is favourable. It was clarified that the HNB settlement will be clear in April 2025.

A letter from headteachers representing from several maintained secondary schools was shared.

A question was raised about whether the issues related to SEND provision are being looked at nationally. It was mentioned that the new government aims to support inclusion in mainstream schools to help manage demand. Additionally, the Change Programme is expected to influence policy moving forward.

Members were requested to vote and approve the High Needs Block interblock transfer request. Results as below:

High needs block- Interblock transfer request	No. of 'Yes' 11	No. of 'No' 2	No. of Abstention 1
---	-----------------------	---------------------	---------------------------

**5. Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business**

Meeting concluded at 09:17

Next meeting - To be held Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January