**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCHOOLS FORUM**

Minutes of the Extraordinary Schools Forum meeting held on Friday 22 March

2024, commencing at 11.30am and finishing at 12.30pm

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| **Present:** |  | |
| **Members:** | Nathan Thomas (CEO Acer Trust) – in the Chair | |
|  | Jacqui West (Alternative Provision / PRU Headteacher Rep)  Brenda Williams (Maintained Primary School Governor)  Natalie Wilson (Maintained Nursery Headteacher School Rep)  Lorraine Wilson (Special School Headteacher Rep)  Maureen Thompson (Academy Primary Governor Rep)  Brenda William (Primary Maintained Representative)  Row Martin Substitute Geoff Bramer (COTO) | |
| **In attendance:** | Councillor Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People’s Services.  Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Send Improvement (Observer)  Kate Reynolds (Interim Deputy Director for Education, Oxfordshire County Council)  Tracy Stratta (COO Special Representative, Propellor Trust)  Victoria’s Woods (Banbury St Mary’s HT)  Martin Goff (Head of Access to Learning)  Thomas James (Finance Business Partner, Oxfordshire County Council)  Mohamed Cassimjee (Democratic Services Officer) | |
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| *These notes indicate the outcomes of this meeting and those responsible for taking the agreed action.*  *If you have a query please contact Mohamed Cassimjee, Committee Officer (*[*committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordsire.uk*](mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordsire.uk)*)* | |

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| * 1. **Apologies and welcome**   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introductions were made.  The meeting was not recorded.  Apologies for absence were received from; Row Martin (Council of Oxfordshire Teacher Organisations (COTO), Carole Thompson and Catharine Darton  **Declarations of interest**  No Declarations of Interest were noted.   * 1. **Funding for special schools (2023/24 and 2024/25).**   The Chair indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider one agenda item namely, the “Funding for Special Schools and Special Academies funding 2023/24 and 2024/25”, which raised the issue of additional funding. He said that the budget is depended on national government and is given yearly which makes it difficult to plan.  The discussion focussed on the following points:   * In terms of 2023/24, there was a proposal to uplift the special school funding to a 9% increase from the existing 3.4%. * This has been implemented by calculating the cost of a 5.6% increase to the overall funding formula in 2023/24. Effectively it is a 13.6% increase in the top up per pupil from the original proposal for 2023/24. * For 2024/25, the principles of the special schools and special academies funding model for 2024/25 are proposed to remain the same as that agreed by special school headteachers in 2014. * In terms of National Funding Formula (NFF) funding approach, all primary and secondary mainstream school settings have initially been guaranteed a 0.5% increase on pupil-led funding per pupil. * The place funding rate remains at £10,000 per place as set out in national guidance. * The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will continue to apply to maintained special schools and special academies (including special free schools) in 2024/25. * For 2024/2025 this will be set to +4.3% which ensures a 4.3% increase in the budgets. Combined with the 9% these increases overall special school funding by 13.3% from the original 2023/24 formula. * During the 2024/25 financial year Oxfordshire County Council will need to develop and implement a SEND financial strategy. There is a need to simplify the current formula and to consider the inflation rate. * The purpose of the fund is to provide security and parity for more children. * The issue of swimming pools which are included in funding formula needed to be reviewed. This is especially important considering the increase in energy costs**.** * In terms of the funding reports, it was indicated that that it would be preferable for reports to go to a financial sub-committee to allow members to interrogate the report before the meeting.   **The Schools’ Forum resolved to:**  a. Confirm the in-year change to the special schools and special academies top-up funding in 2023/24 to reflect the proposed uplift to a 9% funding increase.  b. Confirm that the same methodology for applying the uplift continues at the same rate per pupil in 2024/25.  c. Confirm support of no other changes for 2024/25 to the principles of the special schools and special academies funding model used in 2023/24.  d. Note the increase in core top up rate to replicate the 0.5% pupil-led funding per pupil increase to be received by primary and secondary schools in 2024/25.  e. Note the requirements under the DSG conditions of grant in respect of the Minimum Funding Guarantee and the requirement to pass on part of the additional high needs funding for 2024/25 to special schools, PRUs / AP, and the hospital school.  **1.4** Date of next meeting.  The next ordinary meeting to be held on 25 June 2024 |  |

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|  | | in the Chair |
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| Date of signing |  |  |

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