**Oxfordshire County Council**

**Schools Forum – 7 February 2024**

**Support for Schools Forum**

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| **Settings** | **Sector** | **Voting Entitlement (for decision papers only)** |   |
| Academies |  | Foundation Stage |  |  |  |
| Maintained Schools |  | Primary |  |  |  |
| PVI Nurseries |  | Secondary |  |  |  |
| Special Schools |  | Special |  |  |  |
| Local Authority |  | 16+ |  |  |  |
| Schools Forum |  | High Needs |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Item for Information**

1.1 This paper outlines the support which will be put in place by Oxfordshire County Council to support the Schools’ Forum so it can continue to fulfil its’ statutory functions.

**2. Purpose of Report**

2.1 The Government requires every local authority to set up a Schools’ Forum.

Its purpose is to provide strategic direction for the funding of schools in the local authority and support services in relation to new school funding arrangements cover:

* The Dedicated School’s Grant (DSG)
* The School’s Budget (centrally retained and Individual School Budget)
* Wider issues such as service contracts and service level agreements.

2.2 To support the Forum, it is proposed to appoint a Schools Partnership Officer and to provide a variety of training and support.

**Schools Partnership Officer**

2.3 The job description for this post is attached as Appendix A.

2.4 This appointment will contribute towards the efficient and effective functioning of the Forum by providing:

* guidance to ensure that the forum works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands potential consequences for non-compliance
* advice on procedural matters relating to the operation of the Forum
* administrative and organisational support

**2.5 Training and Support**

Once in post, the School Partnership Officer will be responsible for working with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum to develop a training and support plan that ensures all members of the Forum (and particularly new members) have access to up date information and a training programme that meets their needs.

In order to ensure a ‘right fit’ the Chair of the Forum will be part of the recruitment process.

**3. Recommendations for Schools Forum**

Schools Forum is requested to note that:

3.1 The work to support the Forum is in hand.

3.2 If recruitment is successful, a new support officer will be in post for the Forum’s meeting in June. They will then commence the work of developing an appropriate training and development plan. This should be in place for the academic year starting September 2024.

**4. Funding the post**

* 1. It is proposed that the post is funded by OCC and the Schools’ Forum on a 70/30 split. The funding that the Forum would contribute would be a maximum of £12,510 per annum (calculated for a post at top of Grade 8 scale and including 30% oncosts). The agreed budget for Schools’ Forum for 2024/2025 financial year, is £132,000.

**5. Financial and Staff Implications - centrally and for schools**

5.1 The financial implications for the Forum are listed above.

1. **Equal Opportunities Implications and Impact on Equality Groups**

6.1 The recruitment to this post will follow the Council’s policies and procedures and adhere to equalities best practice.

1. **Conclusions**

7.1 This report outlines the approach to provide support for the Schools Forum to ensure it meets it statutory and other obligations.

**Appendix A:** **Schools Partnership Officer: Job description**

# Section A: Job Profile

The job profile provides key information relating to the salary and working conditions e.g., location of a job, along with the current focus of the role and a brief description of the main duties.

## Job Details

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| --- | --- |
| Job Title: | Schools Partnership Officer |
| Salary: | TBC |
| Grade: | 8 |
| Hours: | 37 hours per week |
| Team: | Education |
| Service Area: | CEF |
| Primary Location: | Home based, attending face to face meetings across Oxfordshire. |
| Budget responsibility: | None |
| Responsible to: | Deputy Director of Education |
| Responsible for: | N/A |
| Political Restricted Post: | N/A   |

## Job Purpose

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| --- |
| The Government requires every local authority to set up a Schools’ Forum. Its purpose is to provide strategic direction for the funding of schools in the local authority and support services in relation to new school funding arrangements cover:* The Dedicated School’s Grant (DSG)
* The School’s Budget (centrally retained and Individual School Budget)
* Wider issues such as service contracts and service level agreements.

The Clerk will contribute towards the efficient and effective functioning of the Forum by providing:* guidance to ensure that the forum works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands potential consequences for non-compliance
* advice on procedural matters relating to the operation of the Forum
* administrative and organisational support

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) recognises that a good Clerk provides an invaluable link between the members of the schools forum, the Chair and the local authority. In addition, the officer will take on responsibility for a range of strategic partnreship meetings: organising agendas, room bookings, taking minutes and wider administrative support to the Deputy Director of Education and the Director of Children’s Services as appropriate. |

## Job Responsibilities

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| **Advice and Guidance**The clerk provides independent and expert advice to the Forum and other school focused strategic partnerships on its duties and functions, contributing to the efficient conduct of the Forum by:* advising the Forum on relevant legislation and procedural matters where necessary before, during and after meetings
* knowing where to access appropiate legal advice, support and guidance
* advising the forum on their constitution and terms of reference
* if appropiate, provide tenchincal advice in relation to the schools forum regulations and in relation to the operation of their consitution
* respond to any queries about the business of the schools forum from headteachers, governors and others who are not on the schools forum themselves
* monitor, on a regular basis, the schools forum and general schools funding pages on the GOV.UK website; and arrange for the distribution of any relevant DfE information to schools forum members
* advise on membership issues in general
* advising the Forum and each group or sub-group on managing their election processes
* assist with the co-ordination of nomination or election processes run by the constituent groups
* advise local authoriy officers and elected members to complete the EFSA Schools forum self-assessment toolkit to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their schools forum.

**Organisation and administration of meetings**The clerk supports the smooth and effective running of meetings by:* liaising with those preparing papers to make sure they are availble on time, and distribute the agenda and papers as required
* ensuring meetings are quorate
* drafting minutes of meetings, indicating who is responsible for any agreed actions with timescales, and circulate as agreed with the members of schools forum
* minutes should be produced as soon after the meeting as possible, they will note whether a particular item was for decision, information or consultation
* any decisions taken by the Forum will be recorded in the minutes
* maintain an action log to ensure all action points agreed are followed up

**Managing Information*** make a record of the processes by which the relevant schools within each group and sub-group elect their nominees to the schools forum and be able to advise the Chair of the schools forum and local authority on action that needs to be taken, where necessary, to seek new nominees
* maintain the list of members on the schools forum
* be responsible for ensuring contact details of all members are up to date
* ensure the Clerk’s contact details are published on the local authority website and that it is clear to interested parties how they can attend the meeting remotely
* provide the route by which schools forum members can access further information and co-ordinate communication to members outside of the formal meeting cycle
* keep the schools forum website up to date, for example by posting latest minutes and papers

**Relationships and development**Good relationships between the clerk and members of the Forum are essential for open communication. The clerk should fulfil these responsibilities, whilst maintaining idependence, by:* developing and maintaining professional working relationships with the chair and members of the Forum
* demostrate a commitment to developing and improving their own knowledge and skills; learning from others to improve their own practice; sharing their skills with others
* is aware of the importance of robust, constructive challenge both in meetings and in the wider organisation, and supports the Forum in developing a culture where challenge is welcomed
* support the good practice for schools forums to offer training to new or exisiting members who may benefit

**Legislation and Regulations**An excellent understanding of the Schools’ Forums duties and responsibilities; legislation and procedures; and the wider education context.* Education Act 2002
* The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012
* The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
* Schools forum operational and good practice guide
* Schools forum powers and responsibilities
* Schools forums structure
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# Section B: Selection Criteria

This section provides a list of essential and desirable criteria that detail the skills, knowledge, behaviours, qualifications, and experience that a candidate should have to perform the job. The selection criteria provide a list of essential (no more than 8-10) and desirable criteria (no more than 4).

Each of the criteria listed below will be measured through the application form (A) and optionally - a test / exercise (T), an interview (I), a presentation (P) or documentation (D). You must provide a supporting statement as part of your application which includes examples and evidence of when you have demonstrated the criteria listed below. You will be expected to address each point separately and, in the order, listed. If you do not complete a full supporting statement in the requested format your application may be rejected.

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| Essential Criteria | Assessed By: |
| IT skills including use of Microsoft office | A,I |
| Experience of taking precise, accurate minutes | A,I |
| Education to A level standard or equivalent qualifications/experience | A, I |
| A proven ability to prioritise and work under own initiative | I |
| Strong organisational and time management skills | I |
| Excellent communication skills – both oral and written | A,I |
| Proven administrative and organisational abilities | A,I |
| Excellent literacy skills including spelling | A, I |
| Ability to work with diplomacy and tact, showing a respect for confidentiality | A, I |
| Flexible approach to tasks and an ability to use initiative | A, I |
| Commitment to customer service | A, I |
| Access to car and ability to travel independently to various locations within the county | A, I |
| Knowledge of Educational Legislation and school governance | A,I |
| Knowledge of Local Government  | A,I |
| Demonstrate the ability to build strong relationships | A,I |
| Desirable Criteria | Assessed By: |
| Excellent presentation skills | I |
| Commitment to continuing personal development | I |
| Experience as a clerk, governance professional or democratic officer | I |
| Ability to maintain confidentiality and remain impartial | I |
| Maintain awareness and comply with OCC (Oxfordshire County Council) procedures and policies | I |

# Section C: Pre-employment Checks

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance, and verification of certificates. Further information can be found here [Pre-employment checks](https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/support-attending-interviews)

Additional pre-employment checks specific to this role are identified below (those ticked).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R | Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Children’s and Adults Barred List | ☐ | Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check without [an Adult/Children’s barred list check](https://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safer-recruitment-and-disclosure-and-barring-service-checks#enhanced-dbs-check-without-an-adult-childrens-barred-list-check) |
| ☐ | Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Children’s Barred List | ☐ | Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Adults Barred List |
| ☐ | Standard Disclosure and Barring Service check | ☐ | Basic Disclosure |
| ☐ | Disqualification for Caring for Children (Education) | ☐ | Overseas Criminal Record Checks |
| ☐ | Prohibition from Teaching | ☐ | Professional Registration |
| ☐ | Non police personnel vetting | ☐ | Disqualification from Caring |

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| ☐ | Other (please specify):       |

# Section D: Working Conditions

This is a guide to the working conditions and the potential hazards and risks that may be faced by the post-holder.

## Health and Safety at Work

You are responsible for your own health, safety, and wellbeing, and undertaking health and safety duties and responsibilities for your role as specified within Oxfordshire County Councils Health and Safety Policy.

The potential significant hazard(s) and risk(s) for this job are identified below (those ticked).

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| ☐ | Provision of personal care on a regular basis | ☐ | Driving HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicles) or LGV for work |
| ☐ | Regular manual handling (which includes assisting, manoeuvring, pushing, and pulling) of people (including pupils) or objects | ☐ | Any other frequent driving or prolonged driving at work activities (e.g., long journeys driving own private vehicle or a council vehicle for work purposes) |
| ☐ | Working at height/ using ladders on a regular/ repetitive basis | ☐ | Restricted postural change – prolonged sitting |
| R | Lone working on a regular basis | ☐ | Restricted postural change – prolonged standing |
| ☐ | Night work | ☐ | Regular/repetitive bending/ squatting/ kneeling/crouching |
| ☐ | Rotating shift work | ☐ | Manual cleaning/ domestic duties |
| ☐ | Working on/ or near a road | ☐ | Regular work outdoors |
| ☐ | Significant use of computers (display screen equipment) | ☐ | Work with vulnerable children or vulnerable adults |
| ☐ | Undertaking repetitive tasks | ☐ | Working with challenging behaviours |
| ☐ | Continual telephone use (call centres) | ☐ | Regular work with skin irritants/ allergens |
| ☐ | Work requiring hearing protection (exposure to noise above action levels) | ☐ | Regular work with respiratory irritants/ allergens (exposure to dust, fumes, chemicals, fibres) |
| ☐ | Work requiring respirators or masks | ☐ | Work with vibrating tools/ machinery |
| ☐ | Work involving food handling | ☐ | Work with waste, refuse |
| ☐ | Potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids | ☐ | Face-to-face contact with members of the public |

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| ☐ | Other (please specify):       |

**Agile Working**

All staff may be required to work from a different base or in a different location at some point in the future in line with any Council or school needs.  Such changes will be made after proper consultation and shall be deemed to be reasonable after considering any personal requirements.