

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS FUND MONITORING GROUP  
HELD ON THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008 AT PORTLAND SCHOOL**

Members of the SFMG present were: -

Mrs J Chart (Headteacher Rep. – Special) - Chair  
Mrs W Angus (Headteacher Rep. – Infant)  
Mrs K Bennett (Headteacher Rep. – Junior)  
Mrs M Brabban (Headteacher Rep. – Nursery)  
Mrs S Brown (Governor Rep. – Primary)  
Mrs K Elliott (Headteacher Rep. – Special)  
Mrs Y Gray (Chair of Schools Forum)  
Mrs M Johnson (Headteacher Rep. – Community Primary Washington)  
Mrs C Jones (Headteacher Rep. – Community Primary South)  
Mrs J Lowther (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Sunderland North)  
Mr T Walker (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Hetton/Houghton)  
Dr E Yeates (Secondary Headteacher)

Together with: -

Lynda Brown – Head of Standards  
Patrick Candon – School Improvement Officer  
Julie Green – Principal Finance Officer  
David May – Finance Manager  
Sue Morgan – Senior Primary School Improvement Officer  
Colin Ranson - Asst Head of Community Services (Facilities Man)  
Gary Robinson – Governor Support Manager  
Raj Singh - Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager

Action Points

**MG08/09 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr H Brown (Vice-chair of Schools Forum)  
Mrs D Butler (Governor Rep. – Secondary)  
Mrs D Elliott (Governor Rep. – Special)  
Mrs S Hyland (Secondary Headteacher)

**MG08/10 Minutes of previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

**MG08/11 Matters arising from the minutes**

MG08/03 (ASTs) – The Schools Forum had agreed that any balance of funding from the Development grant after suitable Advanced Skills Teachers had been appointed be distributed by pupil numbers. Finance were waiting for March salaries to be paid to quantify funds remaining.

MG08/03 (e-learning credits) – David May was now able to report that the £5,000 identified for PVI Nursery settings had been spent.

MG08/04 (terms of reference) – The role of the SFMG would be kept under review in the light of changes including the Area based Grant. There would be further discussion at subsequent meetings.

MG08/05 (Standards Fund Balances) – David May would present a discussion paper to the July meeting of the Schools Forum on school balances. This would include Standards Fund balances being taken into account in calculation of overall school surpluses.

## **MG08/12 School Lunch Grant 2008-11**

Colin Ranson joined the meeting at this point.

Members had received a report in advance of the meeting which provided an overview of the DCSF School Lunch Grant 2008-11. The report outlined the options for its prioritisation. The School Lunch Grant followed on from the DfES Transitional School Meals Funding 2005-08, which provided £220m to transform school meals. The current funding was split into two grants paid via the standards fund:

- Grant 5a (targeted school meals grant) was paid directly to Children's Services, with its purpose to be determined in the light of local needs and circumstances and through discussions with the Schools Forum.
- Grant 5b (school meals grant) was directly allocated to schools, with each school given a lump sum depending on school sector and additional funding based on pupil roll

Colin reminded members that, within Sunderland, it had been agreed with the School Forum that a city-wide strategy be developed for all of the funding, with each school given the option of retaining their portion of the school meals grant, or delegating it back to the city-wide strategy. A total of 98 schools chose to participate in the city-wide strategy. The strategy for the funding was developed through a partnership approach between Children's Services, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, Healthy Schools, City Hospitals Sunderland and Community and Cultural Services (CCS), with CCS acting as the lead agents for the delivery of the strategy.

Among the main priorities for the funding were the employment of a Specialist Dietician to support all schools to meet the standards, a Food in Schools Coordinator, an increase in the spend on ingredients by five pence per meal and development of a marketing strategy to promote uptake of school meals and healthy lifestyle choices. Grant 5b had been used to employ a Food in Schools Team to work directly with children to deliver interactive and informative activities based around healthy lifestyles. Colin reported that this programme would be funded for the next year by the PCT through the obesity strategy. Grant 5b had also funded improved equipment in school kitchens and the provision of training for all catering staff.

The total value of the School Lunch Grant was £240m over three years. Each Authority would receive a share of £80m for each year of the grant, based on 70% pupil numbers and 30% free school meal numbers. Sunderland's allocation for the year 2008/09 would be £457,046. Unlike the transitional school meals funding there was only one grant and this was allocated via the standards fund with an expectation that all Authorities consulted and agreed with the Schools Forum on how the funding should be shared out locally. The purpose

## **Action Points**

SFMG terms of reference to be kept under review in the light of Area Based Grant

D May to present a discussion paper to the July meeting of the Schools Forum on school balances

of the School Lunch Grant was to focus on increasing school lunch uptake, specifically by helping to keep the price of a school lunch down. The grant could be used in the following four ways:

- To pay for ingredients costs for school lunches
- To pay for labour costs of catering staff
- To buy small pieces of kitchen equipment
- To support the implementation of the nutrient-based standards through paying for nutrient analysis software and the expertise to operate the software

In view of the greater restrictions imposed by DCSF on how the School Lunch Grant was used and the expectation that it helped keep the price of a school meal down, it was proposed to prioritise the vast majority of the funding for ingredient costs. Therefore the funding would be devolved to all schools based on either a) pupil roll call or b) previous meal uptake. In addition, it was also proposed to retain the services of the Specialist Dietician to support the implementation of the nutrient-based standards.

Colin drew attention to the national nutritional standards. The nutrient-based standards were clearly stricter than the standards currently in place in terms of what could be offered on the school menu. The two main areas of concern regarding meeting the nutrient-based standards were those primary schools that had opted out of the Council's in-house provision and secondary schools. It would be crucial for those schools that opted out of CCS to have access to dietetic support as these schools were likely to find it particularly challenging to meet the requirements of the nutrient-based standards in view of the expertise needed to develop menus that would meet the micro-nutrient expectations of the nutrient-based standards and the resources required to procure and manage the nutritional analysis software packages. The standards would be harder to implement in secondary schools than in primary schools as the intake of each school was less standardised. Sunderland's Specialist Dietician and School Meals Service were currently designing and analysing menus to ensure they met the standards.

It was therefore proposed that the role of the dietician, at a total cost of £34,091, should be retained and be available to all schools in the city so that the legal requirements of the nutritional-based standards were met and consistency was ensured. Thereafter, the funding should be distributed to all schools to support ingredients costs using a formula to be agreed by the Schools Forum.

Joy Lowther asked for clarification of the method of distribution of funding. Colin explained that a decision was still to be taken on whether this would be based on uptake or pupil numbers. David May confirmed that it was for the SFMG and Schools Forum to take this decision. If based on pupil numbers it would be on the January roll. It was felt, however, that there were advantages to distributing it on uptake as this encouraged participation.

Joy Lowther commented that there were a lot of grey areas for schools that had opted out of the consortium with regard to nutritional standards analysis. Colin made it clear that schools that were not part of the consortium would receive a proportion of the School Lunch Grant for nutritional standards analysis. Each school would receive this on the condition that they spent it on the criteria outlined in the grant conditions. Colin also indicated that CCS could support the procurement of services from providers who could undertake nutritional standards analysis. Catherine Jones reported that this

question had been raised at the Sunderland South Area Primary Headteachers Group and those schools that were not part of the consortium wanted to use the same software as schools that were supplied by CCS. Colin Ranson explained that the nutritional standards analysis was ingredients based and therefore the analysis done for consortium schools only related to ingredients used by CCS. Colin explained to non-consortium schools that it was expensive and labour intensive. Joy Lowther felt that it had been made very difficult for non-consortium schools in the past year due to lack of funding. Tom Walker suggested that these schools should consider using part of the profits generated by their kitchen operations to support the cost of this process.

Margaret Brabban highlighted an anomaly between nursery classes and nursery schools in relation to the funding. There were also questions raised around sixth forms. David May would seek to clarify these arrangements around nursery pupils and sixth forms.

In response to questions from members David May confirmed that it was Children's Services rather than CCS which would be holding the monies provided under the School Lunch Grant.

Having considered the proposals, the SFMG agreed to retain the role of the dietician. They also agreed that the remaining funding should be distributed to all schools to support ingredients costs using a formula based on uptake instead of pupil numbers.

Colin Ranson withdrew from the meeting at this point.

#### **MG08/13 Standards Fund Sustainability for Extended Schools 2008-09**

Raj Singh was welcomed to the meeting.

Raj explained that from 2008 onwards the total amount of funding for Extended Services in and around schools increased through the introduction of Standards Fund - Sustainability for Extended Schools. Sustainability funding included resources for LA Coordination.

One of the purposes of Standards Fund Sustainability for Extended Schools was to support the appointment of extended services coordinator in clusters of the Parent Support Adviser role. The maximum amount should be devolved to schools and guidance stated that there should not be a complex bidding process from schools and that funding should be released in line with LA strategic plans. Agreement had been reached, that funding from Standards Fund - Sustainability for Extended Schools would be used to fund four child and family workers who would be part of a team of sixteen child and family workers, two Principal Social Workers and a Team Manager working with children 0-12 through Children's Centres and Primary Schools. This would be jointly funded by Extended Services (£106,776) and Children's Centres (£404,279). They would fulfil the Parent Support Adviser role in Primary Schools in line with Standards Fund guidance. This service was being developed as part of a Sunderland Joint Core offer for Children's Centres and Extended Schools to provide seamless services for children 0-19 and their families.

The remaining funding (£328,199) would be used to commence the process of moving the responsibility of extended services coordination to schools. LA support would taper from 2010-11, by which time, extended services coordinators managed by a named school to provide coordination across a neighbourhood cluster schools would be in place.

#### **Action Points**

D May to seek clarification of school lunch grant arrangements for nursery classes and sixth forms

Agreed to support the cost of dietician using School Lunch Grant. Thereafter funding to distributed to schools on the basis of uptake to support ingredients costs

The current position was the three LA Extended Services Coordinators each had responsibility for two regeneration areas. Within the Regeneration Area, small neighbourhood clusters were aligned to designated Children's Centres. Their purpose was to plan Extended Services effectively alongside a neighbourhood to ensure that all children, young people and families had access to the full core offer of extended services. There were currently sixteen neighbourhood clusters and the plan was to move to nineteen alongside the roll out of Phase 3 Children's Centres. The proposal was to have a schools extended services coordinator in each neighbourhood cluster. The three LA Extended Services Coordinators would remain in post until 2011 funded by Standards Fund - Start up for Extended Schools to use their knowledge and expertise to build the capacity of schools extended services coordinators. By 2011, it was envisaged that the coordination of the extended services in and around schools funding would largely be with schools. The funding would be devolved to a named school through a SLA

The Standards Fund Sustainability for Extended Schools would be used alongside Sure Start Early Years Childcare Grant for Extended Services in 2008-09 to ensure that sufficient funding was in place. By profiling Standards Fund expenditure from September 08 to August 09, it would allow for development time to agree how this will be structured across the city. If this was followed in subsequent years, posts could be funded until the end of the academic year 2010-2011.

Margaret Brabban felt that the proposals were broadly in line with the objectives of the Early Years Partnership.

In reply to questions from members, Raj explained that it was still to be decided which schools would lead the clusters. There were also questions about how this spending was profiled. David May and Lynda Brown would have this discussion with Raj to ascertain the best use of resources.

Raj Singh withdrew from the meeting.

SFMG approved Raj Singh's proposed use of Standards Fund Sustainability for Extended Schools 2008-09

#### **MG08/14 Targeted Support for Secondary Strategy**

Patrick Candon joined the meeting. He explained that the Secondary Strategy School Targeted Support 2008- 09 was to be 100% devolved. The DCSF had issued guidance setting out how they expected it to be used and Patrick's report was aligned to these principles. Some elements were universal, some were intensive and some funding streams were targeted.

Support to all secondary schools was as follows: -

- Improving delivery in the core subjects (£52,800) This category had two funding elements. The first element aimed to support the delivery of the new Secondary Curriculum, which would be introduced in all secondary schools from September 2008.
- Assessment For Learning (£108,234) This element was to deliver improvements in AfL and pupil progress tracking in schools with the ultimate goal of improving pupil progression.

Support for targeted schools was £890,861 and was focused on schools below or in danger of falling below the attainment floor targets and pupils below or in danger of falling below their expected level of attainment.

Additional intensive support to schools with lower attaining core subject departments would include additional support to introduce the revised Secondary Frameworks. Authorities should target funds to those schools that had core subject departments with lower levels of attainment or where there were key groups of pupils whose attainment needed to improve. The funds should allow access to continuing professional development (CPD) with consultant support and to fund the release of leading professionals for training and work in these schools

A sum of £9,540 was available for specific pilots. This would be used for the KS3 Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Dissemination and Development Programme.

Tom Walker noted that this totalled over £1 million and he asked whether the Authority was able to analyse the value for money that these programmes provided. Patrick explained that the government did not ask for this feedback but there was an expectation that schools would self-evaluate and constantly revise their plans. This attempted to help pupils who, without intervention, would fall below their life chances. The SIP would also discuss with the Headteacher.

Yvonne Gray asked about the categories that were focussed on certain schools or certain pupils. Patrick confirmed that all schools would benefit from this. He was then asked how the pupils were identified. Patrick responded that this was based on KS2 results to identify which pupils were at risk of under-achievement. There was a list of named pupils maintained by the Performance & Information Team. Lynda Brown asked whether it was possible to give a demonstration of this without naming an individual child to show how it impacted. Lynda added that it was valuable data for the EiP. Patrick replied that, because it was discussed between the Headteacher and SIP, there was no reason why a demonstration could not be given and he undertook to obtain the necessary information from the Performance & Information Team to facilitate this.

Catherine Jones asked for more information about the £30,000 AfL School Improvement Group (SIG) action research based project. Patrick explained that funding was allocated to schools in response to the completion of action research plans, which triggered AfL consultancy support. The model of school improvement was that change took place in a classroom. A group of teachers who were prepared to change their practice measured there was an improvement in output. This was a characteristic of AfL in Sunderland. Pieces of action research were available and were fed back through workshops.

Members approved the proposals presented by Patrick.

## **MG08/15 Primary National Strategy**

Sue Morgan was welcomed to the meeting. She explained that some of the funding for posts had now moved into a targeted grant. Funding was split between support for all schools, support for targeted schools and specific programmes and pilots

### Support to all schools

This category provided support to ensure schools and teachers made effective use of the renewed literacy and mathematics frameworks. It had two elements:

P. Candon to provide a demonstration of how secondary pupils at risk of under-achievement were identified and how funding impacted.

Secondary Strategy proposals were approved

- **Improving delivery in the core subjects (£192,640)** - This element provided support to improve delivery in the core subjects, the 2008-09 CPD programme for improving progress in literacy and mathematics with a specific focus on the new assessment area including Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) materials. It also aimed to make more effective use of Leading Teachers to improve practice and progress
- **Assessment for Learning (£159,652)** - This element was to deliver improvements in Assessment for Learning (AfL) and pupil progress tracking in schools with the ultimate goal of improving pupil progression

#### Support For Targeted Schools (£247,042)

This category was focused on schools below or in danger of falling below the attainment floor targets and pupils below or in danger of falling below their expected level of attainment.

#### Specific Programmes And Pilots

Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) including consultancy costs (£65,000)

Improving Schools Programme (ISP) including consultancy costs (£73,500)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (£38,720)

Behaviour and Attendance: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) cross phase programme (£62,705)

Every Child a Reader (£50,000)

Primary Languages (£185,710)

With regard to the Every Child a Reader strategy members asked how long it would be before schools could make appointments. They also asked what would happen to the funding if it were not used. Sue confirmed that the money would be lost if it were unspent. She explained that in the first year of this three year roll out the funding was a contribution to the LA for the training of a Teacher Leader who in Years 2 and 3 would provide training to identified Reading Recovery Teachers in identified schools (in Years 2&3 there would be funding to schools to support release of these teachers). Reading Recovery Teachers would teach identified six year olds with the greatest difficulties in reading.

Headteachers asked whether it would be possible to take action to retain consultants within the Authority when they had been trained. Sue replied that the Authority could not insist that a member of staff stayed in the City.

Headteachers asked how children would be targeted for the Every Child a Reader programme. Sue explained that it would be based on numbers of children working at the specified level. Schools could share a Reading Recovery Teacher depending on the numbers of children involved.

It was noted that specialist teaching facilities were needed to deliver the Reading Recover and Maths Recovery strategies. It was thought that it would cost around £8,000 to furnish a room to the required standard and it was hoped that there would be some slippage to facilitate this.

Members approved the proposals presented by Sue Morgan.

**MG08/16 Financial Report 2007/2008**

A financial monitoring report was brought to the SFMG at each meeting to inform members of the Group of the current grant position for 2007/2008. The latest report provided an update of information and included:

- Grants notified to date, identifying amounts to be devolved to schools, by means of formulae, either stipulated by the DCFS or recommended by the SFMG to the Schools Forum
- Budget Monitoring Statement as at 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 relating to Local Authority Budgets
- Budget Monitoring Statement up to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 relating to Schools Budgets

David May referred to slippage in the current year's budgets, particularly the EiC. Members noted the report.

**MG08/17 Update on Budget Allocations 2008/09**

There would be some spending plans submitted to the group at the next meeting.

With regard to money for 3-4 year olds and extending hours, it was made clear that there were no problems with PVI settings. The same principles would be used in allocating funding as last year and Early Years staff would be ensuring that schools were delivering flexibility.

David May was questioned about the implications of the Area Based Grant. The allocations within the ABG for 2008-11 needed to be considered against the regulations although it had been indicated that there would be no grant conditions when funds were in the ABG. Schools did not yet know what funding would be received under these (for example, it was not clear whether schools that were part of EiC Action Zones would receive monies). Lynda Brown confirmed that the Authority was looking at this in great detail and there was likely to be a decision within the next week. The Chair asked that the Authority consider the position of special schools when decisions were being made.

**Music Education And The Music Grant**

At the meeting of SFMG in January, it was agreed that a consultation with all schools should take place over two proposals relating to this grant:

- To streamline the operation of the Music Remissions system by devolving funds at the start of the financial year in the form of a Music Remission Subsidy (MRS) grant to schools, with a formula worked out according to the data and information of the Music Remission Log, maintained by Education Finance, and cross-referenced with the annual Music Survey.
- A decision needed to be made as to whether the grant money targeted this year at Key Stage 2 (£130K) should be devolved or retained. The Authority proposed to do the same again this year and using the same formula: a lump-sum allocation to all institutions with KS2 pupils.

The period of consultation was concluded by the meeting of the Music Standards Fund Headteacher Monitoring and Consultation Group on Thursday 28 February 2008. All responses (verbal and one written submission) were unanimously in favour of both

2008/09 spending plans to be presented to SFMG at next meeting

Agreed to devolve music funds at start of financial year via agreed formula. Also agreed to lump sum allocation to all schools with KS2 pupils

proposals. Members of the SFMG agreed to approve these proposals in relation to Music Grant.

**MG08/18 Farringdon ASD Provision Presentation**

It had been agreed to view a video presentation showing the ASD provision at Farringdon. Due to the limited time available it was agreed to defer the presentation.

**MG08/19 Date and time of next meetings**

Meetings of the SFMG were scheduled as follows: -

19<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 1.30 p.m. (Portland School)

11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at 1.30 p.m. (Portland School)

**Action Points**

Farringdon ASD  
provision video  
deferred