

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS FUND MONITORING GROUP
HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH MAY 2006 AT PORTLAND SCHOOL**

The following members were present: -

David Alexander – Principal Finance Officer
 Lynda Brown – Acting Head of Standards & Quality (in the Chair)
 Margaret Brabban (Usworth Colliery Nursery) – Representing Nursery Headteachers
 Elizabeth Bowman (Southmoor) Representing Secondary Headteachers
 Jennifer Chart – (Portland) Representing Special Headteachers
 Peter Collins (Houghton Kepier) School Governor
 Sarah Conn – Senior Finance Officer
 Dorothy Elliott (Portland) School Governor
 Yvonne Gray (St Pauls C of E) Representing Sunderland North Headteachers
 David May – Finance Manager
 Gillian Mitchell (New Silksworth Infant) – Representing Sunderland South Primary
 Headteachers
 Tom Walker (Burnside Primary) Representing Hetton/Houghton/Shiney Row Primary
 Headteachers

	<u>Action Points</u>
<p>MG06/09 <u>Apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from: -</p> <p>Mr J Lishman (Bexhill Primary) School Governor</p>	
<p>MG06/10 <u>Minutes of previous meeting held on 23rd March 2006</u></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record subject to the following amendment:- MG06/06 (Grant 107) action point should read Dawn Shearsmith 'had previously' explained how last year's Primary Strategy funding was underspent.</p>	
<p>MG06/11 <u>Matters arising from the minutes</u></p> <p>06/04 (Centrally retained budgets) As previously agreed D May had circulated reports prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Details of how targeted Behaviour and Improvement monies had been used were included in the 'pack' tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Elizabeth Bowman reported that if the money was targeted, then best practice and lessons learned should be distributed. There was an increasing concern with regard to the criteria. It was reported that Headteachers at a recent Headteachers Group had discussed Value for Money and questioned the direction and strategic planning.</p> <p>David Alexander confirmed that all Grant holders were required to identify what money would be spent on. It was agreed that Elizabeth Bowman would feedback this information to Secondary Heads and report back to the June meeting.</p>	<p>E Bowman to inform colleagues and report back to June meeting.</p>

Schools which benefited would be requested to share good practice. It was noted that there was a need to review the BiP Programme.

Issues surrounding extended schools funding had been included in the 'pack' tabled at the meeting.

Lynda Brown confirmed that Secondary Heads and Cabinet had seen the Extended Schools strategy and that there was a programme for roll out as previously agreed. It was now one year on and there was a need to look at the impact with a review to take place over the next few weeks. The need to provide an update for Governing Bodies was highlighted. Lynda Brown agreed to make arrangements to ensure that the extended schools strategy be included in the LA Summer Term Agenda Booklet.

Concern was expressed with regard to the content of a recent training event, held at the Marriott Hotel, arranged by the Extended School Team. Those present proposed that schools be funded directly and that the Extended Schools Team use their time to write the bids.

It was reported that a grant had been used to employ School Travel Advisors. It was commented that schools had benefited from the service and levels of safety had increased.

Dorothy Elliott confirmed the funding allocated to primary and secondary schools to improve safer routes to school. Those present were informed that there was a lack of information available for special schools. Funding for the Nursery Sector was unknown. Lynda Brown would seek further information how this could support special schools.

An analysis of workforce spending over the past two years and present funding was included in the 'pack' tabled at the meeting. It was noted that the vast majority of the funding had been spent on training.

Following discussion it was agreed that Associated Headteacher (currently working with Secondary Heads on Vocational Gateways) continue from September funded by DSG. The importance of the post was highlighted. It was further agreed that Sue Palmer and Michael Gallagher reduced their secondments to one day per week for the final term to continue their work on workforce remodelling. Lynda Brown agreed to seek a programme of work that had been undertaken.

MG06/12 Grant Distribution Formulae

Members received a copy of the proposals for 2006 – 2007 Standards Fund, Primary Strategy Grant 107 and Secondary Strategy Grant 108 prior to the meeting for consideration.

Grant 108

The proposals for Grant 108 included:-

- the need to develop a consistency of approach on Whole School Initiative using Leading School networks and action research
- tailored support for expert teachers and TAs plus support for personalised learning intervention
- intervention funding to be distributed to schools based upon a familiar formula used for the past two years
- to work with schools below the floor targets in core subject
- to administer the Oxclose School 'Condensed KS3 pilot.

Action Points

L Brown and D Alexander to inform the responsible person to ensure that good practice was shared.

L Brown to forward the extended schools strategy to the Governor Support Team

L Brown to seek further information.

L Brown to request a programme of work.

E Bowman reported that Secondary Headteachers had discussed the proposed funding distribution and believed that Patrick Candon, Secondary Strategy Manager needed to do more work on the document as there was a need to have 'contextual Value Added'. It was felt that there was a need to look at how to invest money to prevent failure in the first place.

Action Points

Patrick Candon to review the formula.

Grant 107

It was reported that not all the Primary Headteacher Groups had met yet. It was proposed to wait until all the Groups had met before reporting back.

Mrs Mitchell reported that from an Infant point of view there was no 'Value Added' as there was no data for comparison. Some pupils entered Reception with a very low starting point and made good progress to Key Stage 1.

It was noted that nursery and special schools were not included.

It was agreed that Y Gray and L Brown would draw together the comments from the Headteacher Groups and the matter would be considered for approval at its meeting in June.

Y Gray and L Brown to collate comments for approval at June meeting.

MG06/13 Monitoring Arrangements for 2006/07

Members received a copy of the Standards Fund Monitoring Arrangement report prior to the meeting for consideration.

D Alexander highlighted appendix A to the report which outlined the monitoring arrangements which would be implemented with immediate effect.

All identified budget holders would be required to submit a detailed spending plan on:-

- what the funding was to be spent on
- how this would add value and ensure compliance with grant regulations
- timing/profiling of when the expenditure would be incurred within a 12 month period

It was reported that the information considered at the Standards Fund Monitoring Group was now part of the monitoring arrangements for Children's Service Directorate.

Following a question with regard to 'who decides the most appropriate way to spend money', D Alexander highlighted the need for 'value for money'. It was agreed there was a need to add a stage to the procedure to include a spending plan report to the Group before any Grant was approved. It was further agreed that there was need to have a reassurance that consultation took place with all stakeholders.

L Brown and D Alexander to provide a timetable for 2007/08

Y Gray reported that the Schools Forum was satisfied with the process with regard to the Standards Fund Monitoring arrangements and the joint accountability.

MG06/14 Ideas to Share

It was noted that Steve Auster had distributed a new Music Standards Grant. It was agreed the allocation distributed this year would act as a pilot.

Members requested a report on the Music SF pilot.

Action Points

D Alexander outlined the three new Standards Fund Grants.

The Target Schools Meals Grant (5a) and Schools Meals Grant (5b) had been circulated to the group prior to the meeting for consideration.

Grant 5a was retained by the Local Authority and was being used to provide access for all schools in the City to a Dietician, an Incentive scheme, additional spend on primary school meal ingredients and a Food In School Co-ordinator.

Grant 5b was devolved, schools would be able to 'buy back' services for the period of the funding for accredited nutritional training, In house nutritional training and four 'Food in School Workers'

Headteachers commented that all schools would benefit from the Grants and that it would assist in meeting the Every Child Matter agenda.

The Group approved the Grants as presented.

The group discussed the need to set a workplan, schedule of meetings, regularity of meetings (possible half-termly two weeks prior to the Schools Forum). Presentations from Officers would be programmed into the schedule.

L Brown to circulate the information to Headteachers

Schedule of meetings and workplan to be discussed at next meeting.

MG06/15 Financial Report 2005/06

The Group received a copy of the Financial Report 2005/06 prior to the meeting for consideration.

The report advised on the outcome of period 12 revenue budget monitoring review for 2005/06. The information reflected the position of a 17-month budget.

D Alexander reported that Officers were currently working with schools to finalise the position for 2005/06. A financial report would be presented at the June meeting that would reflect the new budget monitoring arrangements implemented and provide detailed explanations as appropriate.

Members of the Group discussed the overspend and underspend balances of individual schools. Following discussion it was agreed that a monitoring process needed to be in place with regard to individual school budgets. School Balances would be considered further at the meeting in June.

Individual school balances to be discussed in June

MG06/16 Date and time of next meeting

The following meetings of the Standards Fund Monitoring group were scheduled for 1.30 p.m. on Thursday 29th June 2006 and 1.30 p.m. on 7th December 2006 at Portland School.