

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS FUND MONITORING GROUP  
HELD ON THURSDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2006 AT PORTLAND SCHOOL**

Those present were: -

Lynda Brown – Acting Head of Standards & Quality (in the Chair)  
Mrs E Bowman (Southmoor) - Headteacher Rep. – Secondary  
Peter Collins (Houghton Kepier) – School Governor  
Sarah Conn – Senior Finance Assistant  
Dorothy Elliott (Portland) – School Governor  
Kathryn Elliott (Columbia Grange) – Representing Special Headteachers  
Yvonne Gray – Representing Sunderland North Primary Headteachers (with their permission)  
John Lishman (Bexhill Primary) – School Governor  
Gary Robinson – Governor Support Manager

Action Points

**MG06/17 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Jennifer Chart (Portland) – Representing Special Headteachers  
David Alexander – Principal Finance officer  
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  
Margaret Brabban (Usworth Colliery Nursery) – Representing Nursery Headteachers

**MG06/18 Minutes of previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

**MG06/19 Matters arising from the minutes**

MG06/11 (BIP funding) – Lynda Brown drew attention to information from Paul Threadgall. There had been a recent showcasing of BIP activities at a Secondary Headteachers' meeting. Headteachers had welcomed this but felt that they needed more detail about how BIP worked with different groups.

MG06/11 (Extended Schools) – It was confirmed that, despite the efforts of the Governor Support Team, no information had been received from the Extended Schools Team in respect of the extended schools strategy. Lynda Brown expressed her dissatisfaction and confirmed that officers needed to be reminded of the importance of providing information for school governors and other groups.

It was commented that Secondary Headteachers were becoming increasingly frustrated over the issues surrounding extended schools and the bidding process. Mrs Bowman wanted consultants to pursue bids on behalf of partnerships of schools. She made it clear that money should be added to school budgets to facilitate work by schools, rather than be earmarked to attend training events. Yvonne Gray echoed this view. Headteachers did not consider attending such training events to be a priority.

Lynda Brown explained that restructuring within the department at present and the bringing together of different teams to reflect the current and future needs in this area.

Peter Collins commented that the solution to the problem was not to attend high profile meetings. Schools instead needed practical advice and support. Partnerships were vital to ensure a co-ordinated approach and examples of good practice would be welcomed.

Lynda Brown acknowledged the need to look at how information was disseminated. Governors questioned why they had not received the extended schools strategy and reiterated the view that this should have been an item in the Governors' Agenda Booklet. Lynda Brown would ensure that this happened for the autumn term 2006 edition.

MG06/11 (safer routes to school) – Dorothy Elliott noted that there were more new initiatives on transport/safer routes to school. On a local level, Dorothy felt that it was unhelpful that the person responsible for safer routes to school was not based in the Children's Services Department. She also noted that part of the Every Child Matters agenda was about staying safe (which included travelling to and from school).

MG06/11 (workforce remodelling) – It had been agreed at the last meeting that a programme of work be requested from Sue Palmer. This had not been received. Lynda Brown would pursue this matter.

MG06/12 (secondary strategy funding) – Mrs Bowman reported that there had been a meeting with Patrick Candon regarding CVAs three weeks previously but nothing had been heard since then. There was a conference for secondary Headteachers soon. Lynda Brown replied by reiterating the instructions she had given to budget holders to consult with the Schools Forum and Standards Fund Monitoring Group. She acknowledged that it was sometimes difficult to change established cultures amongst officers. Finance officers were ensuring that spending profiles were received from budget holders.

MG06/14 (music standards fund) – It was agreed that this area of funding would be subject to scrutiny at a subsequent meeting of the group.

MG06/14 (school meals) – copies of the OneCall performance report were tabled at the meeting.

MG06/15 (school balances) – Members considered the figures presented at the meeting in respect of school balances. It was agreed that School Balances would be a standing item on future agenda.

MG06/16 (timetable of meetings) – It was felt that meetings of the Standards Fund Monitoring Group needed to be scheduled to precede meetings of the Schools Forum. Although the Schools Forum

## Action Points

Lynda Brown to remind officers in the department of the importance of providing information for governors and other groups

Lynda Brown to ensure that Extended Schools Strategy appeared in autumn term agenda booklet.

Workforce remodelling programme of work to be obtained

SFMG to scrutinise music standards fund at future meeting

School Balances to become a standing item on future agenda

meeting schedule was currently disrupted due to its re-constitution, it was suggested that meetings of the Standards Fund Monitoring Group should be held in September, November and January.

**MG06/20 Grant 107 – further consideration**

As agreed at an earlier meeting the proposed use of Grant 107 centrally retained funding had been subject to consultation with each of the Area Primary Headteacher Groups. Comments from each area had been compiled and were presented to the Standards Fund Monitoring Group. It was understood that Dawn Shearsmith had since produced a paper itemising exactly where monies would be spent. Any questions that members of the Standards Fund Monitoring Group wished to raise on this matter would be channelled through Yvonne Gray. Otherwise, the group approved the proposed use of this centrally held funding.

Sarah Conn withdrew from the meeting at this point.

**MG06/21 Financial Report 2005/06**

Special needs

Due to sickness in the service, Annette Parr would be taking the lead on co-ordinating the centrally held budget for SEN. It was not yet clear when money would be available to schools.

Advanced Skills Teachers

The group asked whether the Authority had a strategy for recruiting ASTs. It was noted that schools with ASTs often found organisational difficulties because of the outreach work done by the AST. It was further understood that there were difficulties in recruiting. Peter Collins felt that this needed to be addressed and it was unfortunate that any money would be sent back under this budget heading. Richard Hegarty would be given an opportunity to attend the next meeting of the group to discuss the matter.

Playing for Success

The scheme had now transferred to the Local Authority and it would now be possible to address the difficulties that had arisen.

CLC Revenue

The balance was now nil.

Mini EAZs

The Sandhill View balance had carried forward to 2006/07. Hylton Red House balance was now nil. Usworth balance was nil after the July and August salaries had been processed. Castle View balance was now nil.

**Financial Report 2006/07**

Lynda wanted to be able to provide a spending profile for each area. This would be implemented from September 2006.

**Action Points**

SFMG meetings to be timed to fit with Schools Forum schedule

Any questions re. proposed use of grant 107 funding to be channelled through Yvonne Gray

Group approved Grant 107 proposals

Richard Hegarty to be invited to next meeting of the SFMG to discuss ASTs

Spend profile for each area to be available from September 2006

**MG06/22** Secondary Strategy

The Secondary Strategy budget was overspent by £22,303. The budget holder had been required to re-profile the budget.

ICT Computers for Pupils

ICT Computers for Pupils monies (Grants 210 and 125) would be targeted according to IMD deprivation figures. The group felt that the distribution criteria needed to be discussed, as the grants were unclear. Clive Bulmer would be given an opportunity to attend the next meeting to clarify the position.

Choice Adviser

The group were unclear about the role that the Choice Adviser would play. They questioned why this was needed and how they would advise parents. A further concern was whether the person who fulfilled this role would have knowledge of all the schools in Sunderland. Clarification would be sought from Beverley Scanlon.

BSF

Mrs Bowman reported that it had been possible to reclaim £12,000 of Clive Bulmer's salary because of his work on the BSF initiative.

**MG06/23** New Grants – proposals for approval

There was no further discussion regarding this item.

**MG06/06** Timetable of Future Meetings

The Standards Fund Monitoring Group would continue unchanged until determined by the re-constituted Schools Forum.

**The next meeting of the SFMG was scheduled for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006 at 1.30 p.m. and would be held at Portland School.**

Action Points

Further clarity on grants 210 and 125 requested. Clive Bulmer to be invited to attend next meeting

Beverley Scanlon to be asked to provide clarification of role of the Choice Adviser