

**Schools forum – SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Sub-Group**

**13 May 2004**

**Newton Rigg Campus**

**Notes of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Sub Group of the Schools Forum, held on 13 May 2004 at the Cumbria Campus of UCLan, Newton Rigg**

**Present:** Mr R Alston, Mr C Brooksbank, Mr A Bryant, Mr S Bowditch, Mrs S Gaston-Parry, Mr M Hrynkow, Mr E Tumelty. Mr D Johnston (LEA), Ms A Graham (LEA) and Mrs V Scourfield (LEA) were also present.

1. Mr A Abernethy, Mr P Shaw, Mr M Yearsley, Mr A Rutter, Rev B Thomas

2. Notes of the meeting held on 2 March 2004 and Matters Arising

The notes were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Item 6 – Special School Funding

S Bowditch informed the Group that neither he nor the other five Special School Heads had seen the paper presented to the previous meeting. He requested they be given the opportunity to discuss the report and present their views to the next meeting of the Sub Group. It was proposed and agreed that Item 4 (Special School Funding – Progress Report) on the current agenda should be deferred to the following meeting and that the report to the 2 March meeting be circulated with the agenda for that meeting.

S Bowditch asked that copies of papers for future meetings be sent to the Head of Sandgate School.

R Alston proposed and it was agreed that all future communications would be sent electronically.

3. Social Deprivation – Child Protection Meetings

In the previous year some schools had asked the Schools Forum to consider whether the funding for costs incurred when staff attended child protection meetings should be held centrally rather than delegated to schools within their Social Deprivation funding.

D Johnston presented a report setting out the incidence of meetings and the Social Deprivation Funding allocated to those schools involved. Although there was no direct correlation between the funding allocation for social deprivation and the costs incurred by schools on child protection conferences, the funding was adequate to cover these costs.

R Alston indicated that if a system of centralised funding for Child Protection meetings was set

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up, this would have to be supported by an administrative structure with associated costs, thus reducing the net funding available.

Following further debate the Group agreed that they would not support the centralisation of funding for child protection meetings.

4. Special School Funding – Progress Report

As indicated under Matters Arising from the notes of the last meeting, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

5. SEN Structure (role of Special Schools/Strategic Facilities)

Ms A Graham presented Michael Watmough's draft document, *Developing all Cumbria's Schools – Meeting the special education needs of all pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties*.

The document set out the County Council's proposed action to enable it to fulfil its vision that "All pupils in Cumbria with severe or profound learning difficulties will have a learning programme tailored to their individual needs and an appropriate supported inclusive learning experience in a local setting".

Ms Graham reported that Area Inclusion Reviews of current provision and proposals for new programmes would be carried out on a four year rolling programme. The Review of the Carlisle area took place in Autumn Term 2003, North Copeland in Spring Term 2004 and Kendal area was currently being reviewed. The review of the Eden area would be carried out in September 2004.

Mr D Henderson had carried out a review of Strategic Facilities in 2003 which had revealed: inconsistency of provision, different funding regimes and different admissions policies.

A Working Group of Heads of Strategic Facilities and Special Schools had been established and would consider:

- a consistent method of funding, loosely based on the 3 band model used by Special Schools, and expected to produce a proposal within the following few months;
- a consistent contract between the facilities and the LEA;
- training opportunities for staff.

The following points were raised during discussion on the document:

- Special School Heads were very concerned with the implications of Section C of the document, and had asked for its deletion.
- Would the new strategies be more expensive and how would that affect other schools.
- Parents of children with severe or profound learning difficulties should be educated about the choices available to them;

Ms A Graham confirmed that the LEA is required by law to let parents have details of all the facilities available to support children with severe or profound learning difficulties. The LEA must ensure that mainstream schools can provide the support needed for a child, or direct that child to a Special School.

It was agreed that Ms A Graham would attend a future meeting of the Group to present further details about the implementation of the strategy, and its funding.

6. Post 16 Funding

Post 16 Schools had expressed concern that SEN funding was not directed to pupils. The LEA had written to the LSC who had established a Working Group to examine the issue. The Group had recommended that the present funding model should be changed, but the LSC had not yet notified LEA of any proposed changes.

7. Any Other Business

None

VJS  
18 May 2004