

Early Years Working Party– 2/11/2021

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

Attendees:			
Theresa Staunton (TS) Chair	PVI representative on Schools Forum	√	
Jeni Murphy (JM)	Early Learning Team Manager	X	
Denise Bushay (DB)	Schools Places & Admissions Head of Service	√	
Roger Capham (RC)	Director PACE Academy Trust	√	
Paula Carter (PC)	Gingerbread Corner	X	
Jane Charman (JC)	Head Teacher, Park Hill Infants	X	
Toby Martlew	Principal, Ark Oval Primary	X	
Shelley Davies (SD)	Director of Education	X	
Charles Quaye	Finance manager Education	√	
Asim Saleem (AS)	Local Authority Accountant	X	
Maria Reeve	Acting Head of Purley Nursery School	X	
Chris Marchant (CM)	Goslings Pre-School	√	
Linda O'Callaghan (LOC)	St Mary's Infant School	√	
Yetty Osonaike (YO)	Alpha Day Nursery	X	
Jaqi Stevenson (JS)	Executive HT, Federation of Crosfield & Selhurst Nursery Schools & Children's Centres	√	
Pam Sokhi (PS)	Early Years Inclusion and Intervention Team Manager	X	
Debby MacCormack (DM)	Service Manager, Early Years, Parenting and Parent-Infant Partnership	X	
Agenda items			

Please note: the recording of this meeting was deleted once transcription was completed

1	Apologies and welcome	TS
	The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from TM, JM and AS.	
2	Minutes and actions	TS
	The minutes of the 28.09.21 meeting were agreed. TS thanked JM and AC for collating the minutes. Update on Actions: MNS SENCOs to be invited to School SENCO Forum JS said she has a new SENCO and will follow up on whether an invitation has been sent out. ACTION – JS	

	<p>TS confirmed meetings held on what and when papers will come to the EYWG.</p> <p>EYB reserves TS to look back at notes regarding disbursement and the reason for asterisk on the outturn document – carry forward to Pre-Meet – TS/CQ</p> <p>MNS funding paper – on today’s Agenda</p> <p>Investigate what happened regarding claw back – will be covered in MNS funding paper - CQ</p> <p>Centrally retained funds paper will be looked and a further paper around a proposal to transfer money to the Children’s Centres will be presented to the EYWG meeting on 30 November 2021 and then to Schools Forum on 6 December 2021.</p> <p>Maintained Nursery School Paper to be presented at 30 November 2021 meeting and then to Schools Forum on 6 December 2021.</p> <p>Any other business Breakdown of figures agreed on the number of schools/nursery places being supported – PS emailed members directly. Further meeting being held today to ascertain where information can be released to and present this to the High Needs meeting on 17 November 2021.</p>	
3	<p>Early Years Strategy – Consultation Timeline</p>	DB
	<p>DB said this is a draft Early Years strategy. A working group from across the LA has been formed and this will involve colleagues with wide knowledge and experience, who will help with the development of the strategy, to take it forward for consultation. This is a collaborate piece of work that is integrated across the different parts of the LA that deal with Early Years. The timeline has 7 phases and the LA is down to Phase 3. The working group is a key stakeholder and is meeting on the 9 November 2021. The LA will be looking to engage with stakeholders as soon as possible to seek their suggestions and input at key points.</p> <p>ACTION – DB to share draft Early Years strategy following 9 November meeting. A delivery plan has also being produced on how to realise the priorities and outcomes of the strategy which will be child centred and outcome based. The LA are aiming to complete the plan by 1 April 2022. TS asked who the lead is and if there are sector providers being represented.</p> <p>DB said there will be a rotation of chairs e.g. health, early help, social care, education etc who will bring a wide range of knowledge from their fields. Part of the consultation will involve a focus group of providers, parent/carers who will feed into the strategy.</p> <p>TS said this feels like a repeat of the Best Start steering group which was a commissioned service that launched in 2016. This involved education, health, children’s centres, sectors, schools and social care.</p>	

	<p>JS said the steering group had a lot of significant parental contributions and the challenge encountered was agreeing the appropriate protocols for information sharing.</p> <p>TS asked if there were minutes from the Best Start meetings that can show what worked well and build on this.</p> <p>ACTION – DB/JS to locate the Best Starts minutes with focus on 2016/2017 years.</p> <p>CM referred to the rotating chair and asked DB how this would work in practice. DB said having varied chairs e.g. from health or social care or education will allow each group to bring their speciality to the meetings. The ToR is clear on the roles and responsibilities of the chairs. DB reminded members as users and providers to email her with anything to assist the strategy.</p> <p>CM asked if evidence based was looked at. DB said as part of the evidence base, other boroughs e.g. Kent were looked at. There is no coordinated or integrated strategy that deals with Early Years.</p> <p>CQ referred to Para 2 of the Introduction...(from conception to age 5)... and asked if DB is working with the hospitals e.g. pregnant mothers? DB said children’s centres have a key part in this.</p> <p>CQ referred to Phase 3: consultation and asked if there was a business case to show what happens now, is it value for money or does it give a better outcome? DB said the need for change is in the draft strategy. This is a 3 year strategy with an annual review. CQ said there should be a legal document created between health and legal. DB said an SLA could be drawn up for the different parties or teams and that the steering group could look into this.</p> <p>TS asked if we are nearer to identifying an Early Years lead as they would have overview of the strategy. DB said that Croydon has a new organisational structure chart which has just gone live this morning and from that a strategic lead is being looked for. ACTION – DB to send new organisational chart to TS. The control panel is meeting today and following this meeting DB will confirm recruitment on the Early Years lead.</p>	
4	Finance update	CQ
	<p>CQ gave a verbal update on how the LA allocates the 5% centrally retrained funding. Point 2 shows the indicative Early Years budget allocation for 2021/22 of £1.297m and that out of this figure the forecast is 1.081m showing a potential underspend of £216k.</p> <p>Table 1 shows the breakdown by service allocation over the last 2 years.</p> <p>CQ said Point 3.6 SEN team support costs, is a controversial area. The High Needs block allocates £1.1m for children that are picked up at early years e.g. at nursery, speech delay or other settings where children have complex issues. There is a team within early years that provides this service. He will liaise with this team to identify to how many children have benefited from this teams service.</p> <p>ACTION - CQ to update on the benefits to the children identified by the team. PS has 3 members of staff who deal with the particular area of the high needs function in the early years block.</p>	

	<p>TS explained the Family Space Croydon is the portal by which the LA advises families where there is availability for child spaces. DB said the LA had looked to bring the service in-house but this did not occur and therefore it is under discussion to extend the contract with MCA for another year.</p> <p>CQ concluded that if the central port allows the LA to allocate some money from the pot, to help the children’s centre, this would be of benefit.</p> <p>TS asked if this would be a commissioned service e.g educational psychology (although in-house), chatterbox and SALT that would present papers on the service to show the outcomes, the impacts on spending, how children they helped etc. The Virtual School which is a commissioned service bring a yearly paper to Schools Forum showing a breakdown on how the money is spent. TS said there will be lots of requests for the use of the money from the central service e.g. looking at supporting 2 year olds, looking at the rates, financial top ups to settings supporting SEND. JS would like to see the Early Years included in the new SEND locality hub model. Working across provision is in the best interest of children.</p> <p>ACTION – CQ will take forward the locality model and explore this as part of the strategy.</p> <p>DB agreed with JS and said one of the key drivers in the strategy is to build on existing locality provision. There is progress in alignment with the locality for SEND.</p> <p>JS said the children’s centre hub could be a key part of this.</p> <p>CM received an email from PS on 12 October 2021 stating that “we do not support SEND at universal level”, this she feels is in contradiction to the Early Years entitlement of the LA guidance which says in 6.3 “that it is a requirement to support SEND at universal level”. How has this happened, where has it come from, why and who has agreed it? It feels everything is being to the sectors and not with them.</p> <p>ACTION - CM to forward the email to Kathy Roberts (KR), Head of Early Years SEND and JS. DB/TS to pick this up with KR.</p> <p>TS has had sight of the email as it went to the sector directly. This feeds back to not having enough money in Early Years SEND. TS appreciates DB in trying to get the Early Years strategy developed as a truly working document. In the meantime under this umbrella we are failing because we cannot take any steps forward. If we can get all the data together it will show there is a huge gap in Early Years SEND.</p>	
5	<p>Maintained Nursery School update</p>	DB
	<p>The LA are waiting the chancellor’ decision on how much goes to Early Years or to maintained nursery schools. The government will continue with the holiday and food activity programme for disadvantaged children.</p> <p>ACTIONS – DB and CQ to present the following papers to 30 November 2021 Early Years meeting and then on to Schools Forum on 6 December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The current state of play and the financial status of the 5 nursery schools in Croydon ➤ The proposal to transfer some money from the central reserve to the children’s centre <p>JS understands that maintained nursery schools is a national issue and the only indication she has had so far from the chancellor’s</p>	

	<p>announcements is an acknowledgement that the supplementary funding will be continued until 2024/25. What is not clear is whether there will be any inflationary increases or what the rate will be. There was an agreement at Schools Forum about 5 years ago of £200k for the transformation of the nursery schools and this should be in a pot.</p> <p>ACTION –CQ will do a search on the finance database starting from April 2015 to identify the £200k and feedback.</p>	
	<p>Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding 2021/22</p>	CQ
	<p>CQ referred to Point 2 of the funding allocation explaining how the £536.405 was reached for Croydon by the government. Table 1 shows how these funds are allocated based on the number of pupils.</p> <p>JS remains at a loss to understand the error that took place in the first instance. Table 2 shows a disproportionate disadvantage to the nursery schools that have independent early year’s leadership and shows an advantage to the nursery schools lead by primary schools by this error. What was the nature of the error, who were the group of children on another sheet?</p> <p>CQ said that DB teams needs to ask for pupils numbers.</p> <p>DB said Gill Bates (GB) figures were an oversight and she had sent an email to explain and rectify the error.</p> <p>ACTION – DB to circulate to members GB explanation of MNS funding error.</p> <p>TS said there is a further issue around this as in Schools Forum we looked at the mythology (the smaller number) and making the distribution per child made far more sense than dividing it up equally.</p> <p>JS said it was decided by pupil number last time. In previous years we have been disadvantaged by it being pupil numbers.</p> <p>DB reiterated that Schools Forum makes the decision on the methodology.</p>	
6	<p>Sufficiency update</p>	DB
	<p>The paper covers the funding figure for the most recent forecast which includes Covid updates, holiday, activity and food and the setting data for the summer term of 2021. Ofsted have visited settings in Croydon and the outcomes are illustrated in Point 4 of the paper. Ofsted have visited other boroughs experiencing the same pressures as Croydon.</p> <p>ACTION – DB to communicate with her DfE contact on how are boroughs are coping and saying in regards to the Ofsted visits. Pre-Ofsted support will continue in a workshop format.</p> <p>There is an Afghan and a Hong Kong resettlement programme that the government is steering and at this stage we are not sure how these additional children will be funded. There are a lot of families in Croydon from Afghanistan and Hong Kong who are not to be included in the census. DB advises settings to keep a separate record of the Afghan and Hong Kong children in their provisions so that when the funding is confirmed it will be easy to access the records.</p> <p>JS asked if this applies to early years providers as the children would be put on role when they join the provision. If they are refugees and are with the provider for a short period of time, when they leave they would go off</p>	

	roll. This is not the same as schools funding where you get a block for an extended period of time. This is less relevant. ACTION - DB said the guidance from DfE was for early years and will circulate this to members. ACTION – DB to produce a paper within sufficiency to identify how many children in early years are affected by the resettlement programme.	
7	Any Other Business	
	DB mentioned that the new organisational redesign structure of the council is live and it would be useful for all to see who the key contacts are.	All

Meeting finished at: 11.46 am: Next meeting 30 November 2021

AGREED ACTIONS		
Actions from previous minutes	EYB reserves TS to look back at notes regarding disbursement and the reason for asterisk on the outturn document – carry forward to Pre-Meet – TS/CQ	TS/CQ
EY Review	ACTION - DB to share draft Early Years strategy following 9 November meeting. ACTION – DB/JS to locate the Best Starts minutes with focus on 2016/2017 years. ACTION – DB to send new organisational chart to TS.	DB DB/JS DB
Finance	ACTION - CQ to update on the benefits to the children identified by the team. ACTION – CQ will take forward the locality model and explore this as part of the strategy. ACTION - CM to forward the email to Kathy Roberts (KR), Head of Early Years SEND and JS. DB/TS to pick this up with KR. ACTIONS – DB and CQ to present the following papers to 30 November 2021 Early Years meeting and then on to Schools Forum on 6 December 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The current state of play and the financial status of the 5 nursery schools in Croydon ➤ The proposal to transfer some money from the central reserve to the children’s centre ACTION –CQ will do a search on the finance database starting from April 2015 to identify the £200k and feedback ACTION – DB to circulate to members GB explanation of MNS funding error. ACTION – DB to communicate with her DfE contact on how are boroughs are coping and saying in regards to the Ofsted visits ACTION - DB said the guidance from DfE was for early years and will circulate this to members. ACTION – DB to produce a future paper within sufficiency to identify how many children in early years are affected by the resettlement programme	CQ CQ CM DB/CQ CQ DB DB DB DB