Croydon Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 15th June 2026

Members Present:	Jolyon Roberts	Keran Currie
	Theresa Staunton	Gill Larocque
	Julie Evans	Kate Lanning
	Sue Lenihan	Jenny Aarons
	Dave Harvey	Dan Bowden
	Maryssa Dako	
Observers Present:	Mark Gyford	Cllr Brigitte Graham
	Imandeep Atwal	Dave Phillips
	Priya Perera	Abioye Asimolowo
	Shelley Davies	
Apologies:	Fiona Robinson, Karen Steele, Tyrone Myton, Chris Andrew, Jenny Bartlett	
Elected Chair:	Jolyon Roberts	
Elected Vice Chair:	Gill Larocque	
Clerk:	Mori Bates	

Item	Detail	Lead/ Action
1.	**Welcome & Apologies**	JR
	Apologies received by MB from FR, KS, TM, CA and JB	
2.	**Minutes & Actions – Meeting 2nd March '26**	GL
	Minutes, actions, and matters arising from last meeting 2nd March '26 Summary of comments made in reference to the previous minutes: 2.1 Continued Action Point: GL queried the figures for Croydon Pupil Referral Units (Line 9 of Appendix A), of which it was agreed a meeting would take place outside of Forum with SD and JB. **ACTION: IN PROGRESS** 2.2 Jan'26: Under 3.4: It was queried as to whether there has been a national difference in the DSG allocation between this year and last year – if these figures are available. AA agreed to investigate – **ACTION AA & JB – CARRIED** 2.3 Mar '26: Under 3.5: The expansion and bulge noted in tables 4A and 4B in the paper are historical payments and part of honouring previous	JB & SD AA & JB

	agreements. It was queried as to which schools are benefiting from the expansion and bulge budget and members asked that the beneficiaries be named. **ACTION: JB –** It was noted that there is just one school seeing out its bulge year. 2.4 Under Agenda Item 4, Q3, DH queried if there was an update regarding a SEND provision. SD confirmed no update could be provided. 2.5 Minutes agreed to be a true record and ready to be published on the website.	
3.	**Membership**	**JR**
	3.1 The Chair noted that the constitution and membership are due to be reviewed. It was added that a self assessment survey would be going out to elected members of Schools Forum with the encouragement for engagement for a wider response. 3.2 IA and MG were introduced as observers for the meeting, with a view to being members of Forum in the new academic year under the academy representatives where there have been some recent resignations in the membership.	
4.	**DSG National Allocations**	**AA**
	4.1 AA presented a table on the DSG allocations that showed figures both before and after deductions and recoupments across the four blocks within education (Schools Block, Centrals Schools Service Block, High Needs Blocks and Early Years Block). 4.2 AA drew Forum's attention to the total DSG allocation at 23/24 at £570,077,363,385, looking at the difference in variation year on year. JR noted that the TPAG would previously have been given as an additional grant, but no information has been seen in regards to this. The TPAG has been rolled into the total allocation figure from the DSG meaning a 'like for like' comparison is harder. 4.3 Although the funding may be at its highest recorded point, nevertheless the money available to spend on school priorities has not risen, after wage rises, inflation and other grants being ceased is taken into account. Nationally, there are 150,000 less pupils and so it would be expected to see a change in per pupil figures to reflect this but this has not happened. Overall, it is currently a difficult time where the funding may be high, but the need is greater. 4.4 It was added that there is a subdivision of FSM being introduced from September 2026 ('Targeted' and 'Expanded') and this will affect the PPG as if FSM numbers fall so will PPG. There were also some questions surrounding the reason for the changes with FSM, as it was	

	supposedly done to create a better way of running things. **Q1:** JR: At the pre meet, AA gave an indication that another source of funding may be coming – is there a further update on this? **A1:** AA: The DSG announces updates at certain times and specific points in the academic year, so there is a possibility for an announcement to come, but there is no confirmation as of yet. 4.5 TS explained that the increase in the Early Years Block is due to the increase in funding streams within the block. There are also a lot of caveats and requirements for funding, so if they do not qualify for funding, then this will be completely removed. Furthermore, the EYP is additional funding for 3&4 YOs where the numbers have gone up exponentially. 4.6 DH queried whether the TPAG will be received, of which AA said that all the separate grants in year 1 are being subsumed into the DSG for the following year. Therefore, there will be no additional payment of grants this financial year except for the FSM expansion grant which will be paid separately this year. 4.7 SD added regarding the SEND reform plan, that experts at hand modelling are due to go out and support SEND needs with additional funding. For example, this could be by rolling out Little Links, but all options are in development, awaiting further planning. We are drawing upon what we know schools appreciate and how the sector can be supported.	
5.	**Maintained Nursery Schools Update (Verbal)**	**SD**
	5.1 SD provided a brief verbal update on the MNS, confirming that each MNS is working closely with a designated school for support. There have been lots of discussions surrounding budgeting so that we can continue to sustain the nursery schools within the borough 5.2 SD added that the deficit on one of the MNS has been decreasing, but there is not yet a current position on this deficit.	
6.	**Internal Audit – General Update (Verbal)**	**DP**
	6.1 DP shared information about the audit and where certain themes are arising within the schools. 6.2 At least 7 schools had issues with self employed IR35 checks. It was found that the majority of schools were paying amounts to an individual (when an assessment should have taken place), of which was causing the school to experience issues with the budget. Furthermore, some schools who were carrying out the assessment were receiving an ‘indeterminate’ answer but this required further action.	

	6.3 The importance of utilising Schools Forum was emphasised to help push back on issues that need to be targeted. There are also tools that can be used to help a school, such as benchmarking or a 3 year plan. However, this plan has to be used in tandem with a robust strategy 6.4 Another area for concern was Information Governance and GDPR, with an importance on the information assets register. This looks into data and how it is stored, kept and used, requiring an emphasis of importance. 6.5 DP noted that there was an element of schools being aware of certain schemes and policies that they have, but they may not be aware of the procedures and information held within the documentation. It was also stated that there are possibilities to make policies and procedures more practical, such as imposing exclusion clauses within a finance policy to allow for certain decisions and actions to be taken in specific situations. 6.6 AA added that failure to comply with can also be costly. For example, the costs of failing to comply can be more than arranging the necessary steps in order to *be* compliant. 6.7 DB requested a list of all the relevant criteria relating to the audits in order to ensure that all points are being met within schools. Generally, some schools may not know what they have not done until they have been audited. 6.8 In connection to the request, it was noted that the audit programme could be used as a test for schools to review as this is not a private document. SD and DP agreed to have a discussion to compile a 'checklist' that could be circulated to allow schools to be more prepared for audits, covering gaps where applicable. **ACTION: SD & DP – Audit Checklist.** 6.9 Cyber security was also brought up at the meeting as there are a number of areas schools need to be wary of, such as AI, phishing, 'Docusign', verifications and deepfake. An emphasis was put on vigilance, awareness and training for schools.	**SD & DP**
7.	**Working Group Updates**	**TS/TM/ FR**
	7.1 Updates were received from the working groups as followed: **a) Early Years –** Working group met and reviewed a sufficiency paper. A new grant is due to come out alongside SENIF and so there will be lots of data collection for where this pot is going. TS raised concern for the fact that no finance paper has been received recently within the working group, specifically for the end of year position. The Early Years Budget has always been managed efficiently by the EY team despite the increasing funding allocations over the last four years,	

	emphasising the importance of knowing the current position at each quarter. **b) Schools Block** – As there were no papers ready to be presented, no meeting went ahead. **High Needs** – Working group met, but there was a lack of attendance from officer and members so the meeting was postponed.	
8.	**AOB**	**ALL**
	The Chair confirmed that a prospective schedule is being collated for each of the working groups to allow for papers to be robustly challenge by members. Attendance in both Schools Forum and its working groups are important to ensure representation across various key players of the education sector, from both schools and the LA. All the working group chairs have expressed concerns about the LA officers and the attendance of membership.	

Meeting Adjourned: 11:24am
Date of next meeting: TBD Sept '26
TBC: F10, Croydon Town Hall