

Early Years Working Party– 30/11/2021

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Attendees:			
Theresa Staunton (TS) Chair	PVI representative on Schools Forum	√	
Jeni Murphy (JM)	Early Learning Team Manager	√	
Denise Bushay (DB)	Schools Places & Admissions Head of Service	X	
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	√	
Charles Quaye	Finance manager Education	√	
Asim Saleem (AS)	Local Authority Accountant	X	
Maria Reeve	Acting Head of Purley Nursery School	√	
Chris Marchant (CM)	Goslings Pre-School	√	
Linda O'Callaghan (LOC)	St Mary's Infant School	√	
Yetty Osonaika (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	√	
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 DB, TM	
2	Minutes and actions	TS
	The minutes of the 02.11.2021 meeting were agreed. Update on Actions: MNS SENCOs to be invited to School SENCO Forum It is an ongoing item. JS advised she is not aware of that. The SD shared the new SEND adviser, who organising the invites, email address: Claire.Farmer@croydon.gov.uk . JS to contact Claire	

MNS funding paper – Agenda Item today

Maintained Nursery School – Agenda item today CQ

Paper to be presented at 30 November 2021 meeting and then to Schools Forum on 6 December 2021.

DB to share draft Early Years strategy following 9 November meeting.

Actioned by DB.

TS informed that lots of work progressing around the new Early Years strategy.

ACTION: DB update next meeting

EY - locate the Best Starts minutes with focus on 2016/2017 years.

JS explained that these actions (there have been few request around Best start) have been picked up by Early Years working group.

SD also confirmed that.

EY - send new organisational chart to TS

TS informed it has not happened. – forward to the next meeting

ACTION: DB to follow up

Finance - update on the benefits to the children identified by the team.

CQ advised it has not been done yet. – forward to the next meeting

ACTION: CQ to follow up

Finance - new locality SEND model

CQ informed he will raise it again at their next meeting.

TS added it has also been picked up at the Early Years review. It will come up at different channels again until it is sorted

Finance - CM to forward the email to Kathy Roberts (KR), Head of Early Years SEND and JS. DB/TS to pick this up with KR.

CM confirmed it was actioned, at the SENCO meeting there different concerns have been addressed. There was a statement which had gaps needed to be filled. There were some reassurance in the meeting from the SENCO Forum

TS added there were positive feedbacks form her team who attended the meeting.

Maintained Nursery School update - AGENDA ITEM today

present the following papers to 30 November 2021 Early Years meeting and then on to Schools Forum on 6 December

Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding 2021/22 - circulate to members GB explanation of MNS funding error

TS confirmed it has been completed.

Sufficiency update – communicate with her DfE contact on how are boroughs are coping and saying in regards to the Ofsted visits.

	<p>JM explained she meets the DfE with DB, sometimes by herself and gave feedback about this item. The amount of inspections across London are quite different e.g. Croydon had 21 while Lambeth had 2.</p> <p>The concerns around the sector: new framework in place; just coming out of Covid – actually not out of Covid; just into a new curriculum. It is has impacted on settings. DfE aware of these issues also there are recruitment issues. It was mentioned at meetings that the inspections are much harder. Also the difference of the number of inspections will give different experience because they have less impact in there are less inspections. Other boroughs have very similar opinion to Croydon.</p> <p>JM added there have been trainings to support the sector. Before September annual visit was introduced, which is an added service, and even more pre-Ofsted have been put on, inviting specific settings, EY new workshop have been put on.</p> <p>Sufficiency update - (families in Croydon from Afghanistan and Hong Kong) the guidance and from DfE was for early years and will circulate this to members.</p> <p>TS has not seen any guidance regarding that.</p> <p>SD said it related to bridging hotel. No bridging hotel any more. No funding in Croydon as the families are moved outside of Croydon. – no longer required</p>	
3	<p>Children Centre paper Centrally retained funding reserves</p>	SD
	<p>TS informed: a bit differently 2 papers (Centrally retained funds and Maintained Nursery School paper) have gone to schools forum pre-meet and come back and will be sent to schools’ forum with the further amendments, if they are needed. Today either have an agreement on the papers, or forward the discussion if no agreement on them.</p> <p>SD shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this paper is about the centrally retained 5%, which is that part of the money we have control of - The school’s forum is asked to approve a one off transfer of £234k underspend of the 5%, just for Children’s Centre delivery - The paper has details about the children’s centres, which support 3-4 year olds and families, shows the background of the purpose of children’s centres, also the current module. - the reason for the underspend was mainly COVID related, around staffing and recruitment etc - SD explored other local authorities (LAs), which do the same, they usually use the retained 5% to support the provision of children’s centres. - a proportion of the underspend is proposed go to e.g.: school readiness; speech and language; other child development support etc. - legislation clearly states what this 5% could be used for - there are different ways of sign off is in place by other LAs - There are lot of details and data in paragraph 3 about number of children, families using the children centres, age group attendance etc 	

QC added to the above

- From financial point there is a guide which need to be followed when using the underspend
- The proposed use of the £234k is clearly going to benefit the 3-4 year old children
- There are no charges (finance, IT, other cost etc) going to be used form the underspend, all is going to spend on the children
- The governance arrangement is going to be followed, so the proposed use of the money needs to pass their approval
- From financial point it is following all terms of regulations, happy to support the paper

JS welcomed the paper; there are many valuable points highlighted.

JS asked if this money already part of what is contracted

SD answered: There was a delay in some of the process we had to go through, so we were paying the children's centres on the same budget envelope, could not move on the next budget envelope, so it is that gap.

JS would like to have more conversation about as in the paper: *“support for children with emerging SEND in partnership with the early Years SEND team. All activities are informed by the EYFS framework.”* it is not clear how it would work.

SD is also happy to discuss this further, how we are going budget the early years SEND.

DM added to CQ and JS valuable points, the paper is very child focused. DM has started conversations with PS and work with the team in relation to SEND.

DM explained a new module is going to start in January, which will focus to support children locally and develop partnerships which support the most vulnerable children. It has also been her task to identify those children who are known to statutory services, children's social care and working in partnership to support those children.

TS summarised the paper was brought to support the recommended proposal. The underspend was the reason of COVID restrictions. We are looking at the change around the children's centres module as well as new Early Years framework. With finance support every sector will benefit from the underspend. The 5% already supports the speech and language and the SEND.

TS concluded: The paper is well supported and the underspend should be transferred to children's centres.

TS questioned if Croydon is going to apply for the HUB funding?

SD answered as there are difficult situation around budgeting the children's centres. Other ways of supporting them and also utilise other funding are under discussion. It would mean how to use children's centres in a different way, not only early years but Early Help and other thing within the HUB module. It has been working well in other LAs.

4	Finance update	CQ														
<p>CQ explained the Q2 budget monitoring report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The final figures have been agreed by the DfE <p>2.1 paragraph shows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - where we are the moment and what is the forecast: forecast £30.108m and budget £30.108m - this represents an in-year forecast to budget. More work is being done to ascertain changes in pupil numbers and its effect on the forecast - so normally it is not planned over or underspend <p>3. paragraph talks about how we finished last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we thought we had £2.9m underspend - the most updated last week report reflects a £774k decrease from the allocation of £29.756m - table 1 detailed the allocation: <p>Universal 3-4yr old entitlement funding: £460,601 Additional 3-4yr old funding for working parents: £89,714 2-3 yr old allocation: £199,776 EYPP: £4,145 DAF: £0 MNS: £20,109 So the total £774k was taken back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Appendix B represent the year outturn <p>It shows that after the £774k decrease what the final position is After recalculated there is £2.2m underspend The table shows the reserves:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Total GL Spend</td> <td style="text-align: right;">27,785,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserves Balance from 2019/2020</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-971,676</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserves Balance Adjustment</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,775</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserves Paid out to providers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">27,392</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserves Paid out to providers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,065,242</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Underspend 2020/21</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-2,253,382</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserves balance C/F to 2021/2022</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-2,123,649</td> </tr> </table> <p>CQ summarised the report as in Appendix A – Early Years Q2 forecast Outturn shows the planned spending in details and spend all the £30,108,452</p> <p>TS thanked QC for this report and added that the outturn report was presented in July before DfE made adjustments. It is normally done in June every year, but there was a delay due to COVID TS explained that the underspend needs to be distributed, as it is part of the 95% pass through rate which has to be distributed. Most of the settings would have had some in August, as in general there is always slight underspend. This year the spending was delayed, as was not certain how much the COVID impact was and anticipated a bigger figure take back. As all attendees were happy with the paper, TS explained how the distribution will be made: look at the figures for last year, the total number of hours; each section across the board will benefit from that.</p>			Total GL Spend	27,785,300	Reserves Balance from 2019/2020	-971,676	Reserves Balance Adjustment	8,775	Reserves Paid out to providers	27,392	Reserves Paid out to providers	1,065,242	Underspend 2020/21	-2,253,382	Reserves balance C/F to 2021/2022	-2,123,649
Total GL Spend	27,785,300															
Reserves Balance from 2019/2020	-971,676															
Reserves Balance Adjustment	8,775															
Reserves Paid out to providers	27,392															
Reserves Paid out to providers	1,065,242															
Underspend 2020/21	-2,253,382															
Reserves balance C/F to 2021/2022	-2,123,649															

	<p>ACTION: JM, TS and CQ work together on the distribution, using the methodology which usually used on underspends. It needs to be done as soon as possible, as there is already delay. CQ to represent this in January.</p>	
5	<p>Maintained Nursery School paper</p>	CQ
	<p>CQ presented the paper</p> <p>1. The introduction explains what has happened over the years: The DfE introduced a change in the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF), based on a flat hourly rate all providers offering places for 3-4 years olds under the free entitlements funding. The changes has since affected the finances of the MNS over the last few years because of their operating model. Recognising this difficult position prompted the ESFA to thereafter introduce the MNS supplementary funding.</p> <p>2. Additional benefits of the MNS Offers additional services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family support workers - Portage teams - Speech and language therapist - Educational psychologist <p>By law all MNS have to have a qualified SENCO, who liaising with staff, external agencies and other professionals, local authorities; leading the assessments and other early intervention needs.</p> <p>3. Financial challenges of MNS All of the above generates costs and causing financial challenges. Table 1 Based on the DfE website data demonstrates the general cost including: staffing, premises, materials, administration. It shows that providing the MNS services are very expensive: above £600,000</p> <p>4. Supplementary Funding ESFA support the MNS through supplementary funding arrangement. Table 2 demonstrates the Croydon MNS's supplementary funding, the maximum given is £141,000, so comparing the cost and funding it is not covering the cost of the running.</p> <p>5. Deficit position in Croydon Table 3 shows that out of the 5 MNS 3 of them are really struggling. CQ summarised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - running MNS is very expensive as the provided data also demonstrates - Some of the Croydon MNS are struggling for quite a while, even if they have been supported, that cannot wipe off the deficit - Suggested to help these MNS from the overspend which is going to be distributed <p>TS answered to the suggestion: As every setting will benefit from the distribution, they will get some support, but not confirmed how much</p> <p>ACTION: CQ to share the most recent versions of MNS the paper, which went to the School's Forum pre-meet</p>	

CM asked if the cost of the above mentioned positions (SENCO, etc) for full time or part time

CQ answered: the figure is an average cost not mentioning if full or part time

CM said that all sector needs to have a SENCO.

JS added that the difference that MNS SENCO have to have a qualified teacher status. Informed that for those schools she is responsible for, they have 1 SENCO and is shared between the schools. There is no directly employed psychologist, it cannot be afforded.

JS presented an additional paper to the above, which is from the provider perspective to give background and context of some of the challenges.

1. The funding issues have been on the agenda for 8-10 years.
There was a business remodelling in 2014/15 and replace the previous transition funding in 2015
In 2017 an additional supplementary funding was introduced as a stop-gap until a permanent solution could be found, but we are still in a stop-gap position.
There is still no agreement (nationally or locally) on the solution, even though as CQ paper also demonstrate the MNS are far more expensive than the others.
It was also demonstrated by CQ that three of the MNS are in a deficit position, so need to look how MNS can actually survive in Croydon
2. In Croydon, distribution of the supplementary funding allocation is agreed by the Schools Forum annually.
Table 1 demonstrates the figures for the last 3 years. It was agreed by the Schools Forum in 2018, but no decisions have been taken. Since then the amount has been decreased, then in 2020 some increased some decreased as it was based on the pupil's number. The next table shows the corrected number.
Due to the distribution method the situation is still MNS have less money.
3. MNS position over the last 3 years is explained. The 5 MNS in Croydon now have very different leadership, management and governance structures. JS detailed those differences and what key points need to be discussed/addressed.
4. JS explained potential opportunities to develop sustainability
5. JS concluded that it has to be decided if MNS are wanted. If so, it needs to be decided how to fund them. If not wanted, they need to be closed.

TS thanked JS for this addition to CQ's paper, as many of the Schools Forum members would not know about the history of Croydon MNS. There are many valid points.

MR added that JS's addition has summarised the issues that MNS are having. From her experience most of the decisions made over the years are not the MNS's fault and might be leading to the position of closure, which she does not agree with, as there are many values of MNS to the community and families.

	<p>JS completely agreed with MR</p> <p>LOC also added the mentioned issues has been for a long time and keeps coming up how to keep the funding maintained and carried on working, but no real plans have been how we want our nurseries to be in the future and working towards that.</p> <p>CQ also agrees to keep the MNS and from finance perspective it is suggested that Early Years to help the nurseries from the underspend they have now</p> <p>TS agreed with the above and that a valid way forward needed to make sure the same issues are not raising again year by year. TS explained within the Early Years it is important not hold fund, but get that money out where it is most useful. So the mentioned 2018 money must have gone out, need to identify when</p> <p>ACTION – CQ to investigate when that 2018 money was spent</p> <p>RC asked if JS’s paper going to be presented to the Schools Forum? TS explained that for an unusual reason the paper have already gone to the Pre-Meet. However, if the paper the finance and JS’s words could be put together for the meeting, it might be possible. RC suggested that the JS’s paper should be presented by JS at the Forum. CQ agreed with RC and suggested to send it to the chair as an addition to support the Finance paper JS is happy to present her paper alongside with CQ at the Forum</p> <p>ACTION – TS to email to the Forum chair and add JS’s paper as a separate but addition to the original paper and feedback to JS and CQ, if it has been accepted</p> <p>JS explained that nationally the MNS are closing and the paper is with her extension is going to support the MNS to stay open in Croydon</p>	
6	<p>Sufficiency update</p>	JM
	<p>JM presented the paper. The Early Years Group is provided the paper for information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forecast funding expenditure 2. SENIF payments 3. Census data update 4. Updated MNS – final adjustment 5. Crosfeild Nursery School 6. Setting support data <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Table 1 shows the autumn forecast figures shown as it looks like with expenditure The actual head count will come on 10th December, so the final amount of this term will be known in January 2. SENIF shows the number of new applications and the number of renewals and cost: £52,472 	

	<p>3. Census figures have been completed and need to be submitted by 13th December 2021.</p> <p>4. The table shows the adjusted figures for MNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rounded up figure £516,296 will be evenly distributed for this payment and the next payment will be taken into account which already have been paid - It was felt to give an equal amount this and next time <p>5. Crosfield Nursery School update The school recently encountered an emergency situation which required site relocation to Malling Close. This relocation will last until the end of the spring term. 8 children have been unable to relocate with the setting. Schools forum agreed with an urgent decision to be made to support with this incident. The Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities states that “LA’s must ensure that providers are not penalised through withdrawal of funding for short term closures of a setting, for example, as a result of local or national elections or damage to the premises”. In line with this guidance funding for to the setting was provided for the week they were closed and for 4 weeks’ notice for any children who left the setting. Children unable to transfer and attend a new setting can claim their funding immediately therefore creating a period of double funding. The maximum expected financial implication to the LA is £5,310.00. However the figure is predicted to be less due to individual children’s circumstances, it was based on the children who were known to be moved immediately to other settings, but not all of them have as they have moved to another borough or other reason</p> <p>6. PVI setting support data Recent analysis of support and engagement data identified that settings who engaged, take part and heed of the pre-OFSTED support programme are more likely to receive a positive OFSTED judgement. Settings who received a good or above judgement in their inspection (since resumed 4th May 21) collectively engaged twice the amount as those who received a less than good judgement. Qualitative data also showed actions suggested by ELT were also identified by Ofsted. Both as actions where the provider did not heed the advice and as good practice where the provider developed their provision following the pre-OFSTED support. This tell us that the pre-OFSTED support is a valuable and effective support.</p> <p>TS thanked JM and mentioned the there was a slight issue to get funding to the nurseries in November, was delayed to December. JM confirmed that MNS, EYPP, DEF did not get paid, so the adjusted equal payment will be in December and next time it is due. CQ explained the delay and confirmed that the deadline is 10th December, it should be paid in December</p>	
7	Any Other Business	
	TS proposed new day for the meeting instead of Tuesday, which not suitable for some members and also in line with the School forum dates. Agreed that the meeting will be held on Thursdays from January 2022.	

Meeting finished at: 12.23pm: Next meeting **13?** January 2022

AGREED ACTIONS		
<p>Actions from previous minutes</p>	<p>EY Review DB to update on previous meeting's actions, if they have been completed: ACTION - DB to share draft Early Years strategy following 9 November meeting.</p> <p>EY - send new organisational chart to TS ACTION: DB to follow up</p> <p>Finance - update on the benefits to the children identified by the team. ACTION: CQ to follow up</p>	<p>DB</p>
	<p>ACTION - CQ to share the most recent versions of MNS the paper, which went to the School's Forum pre-meet</p> <p>ACTION – TS to speak to the Forum chair and add JS's paper as a separate but addition to the original paper and feedback to JS and CQ, if it has been accepted</p> <p>ACTION – JM, TS and CQ work together on the distribution, using the methodology which usually used on underspends</p> <p>ACTION - CQ to produce the Distribution of the underspend paper</p> <p>ACTION – JM to produce EY Funding rates for April and Distribution of the Methodology change paper</p> <p>ACTION – Maintained Nursery School Funding and Methodology distribution paper</p>	