



# **Solihull Schools Forum**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**9:30am – 11:30am**

**Thursday 22 May 2025**

SMBC, Civic Suite, Committee Room 1

Solihull B91 3QB

<b>Member Category</b>	<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Attendance</b> (Y/N/ Apols)
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Lynn Clark	Marston Green Juniors (Northern)	Present
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Bernie Farkas	Blossomfield Infants (Synergy)	Present
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Richard Marshall	Oak Cottage (Evolve)	Apologies
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	John McDermott	St Alphege Inf & Junior (Synergy)	Absent
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Tim Baptiste	Oak Cottage (Evolve)	Present
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Paul Jackson	Castle Bromwich Junior School (Northern)	Absent
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Louise Minter	Streetsbrook I&EY Academy, (Synergy)	Present
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Holly Lynch	TGA Primary St James (Synergy)	Absent
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Mark Pratt	Ulverley School (Mosaic)	Present
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Antoinette Fisher	Dorridge Primary (Rurals)	Present
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Lynda Mackay	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Claire Smith	Tudor Grange (Synergy)	Present
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	VACANCY		
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Darren Gelder	Grace Academy (Unity)	Present
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stephen Steinhaus	Solihull AP Academy	Present
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stuart Shelton	St Peters RC (Synergy)	Present

SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Clare Thorpe	Langley Secondary (Evolve)	Present
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Andrew Best	Smith's Wood Secondary Academy (Fairfax MAT)	Absent
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Claire Eaton	Alderbrook	Present
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Janice Hiorns	Park Hall	Apologies
REPRESENTATIVE OF MAINTAINED SPECIALIST PROVISION (1) attend on rota basis	Andy Simms	Hazel Oak	Absent
REPRESENTATIVE OF SPECIALIST ACADEMIES (1)	Nicola Redhead	The Heights	Absent
REPRESENTATIVE OF PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (1)	VACANCY		
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Andrew Burrow (Conservative)		Present
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Karen Grinsell (Leader: Conservative)		Present for part of meeting
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Samantha Gethen (Independent)		Present
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Jane Davenport	NAHT	Absent
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gareth Eastham	NASUWT	Present
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gary Woodhouse (Substitute Member)	GMB	Absent
REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Gina Godwin	Whitesmore Neighbourhood Nursery (Wise Owls)	Present
REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Lisa Whitehouse	Tender Years	Absent
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Susan Homer / Sonia Wallace	Solihull College	Both absent
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Dr Martin Sullivan	Sixth Form College	Absent

OBSERVERS	Councillor Annette McKenzie (Conservative)		Present
OBSERVERS	Peter Davis	Diocesan Education Service (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham)	Absent
OBSERVERS	Sarah Smith	Education for Birmingham, The Church of England	Absent
OBSERVERS	Ros Ashe	Director of Primary Education, Arden Academy	Present
OBSERVERS	Jodie Hale	Head of School KSII Dorridge - Arden MAT	Present
Officers (attend as required)			
Director of Public Health, Education and Inclusion	Ruth Tennant	SMBC	Present
Director of Childrens Services	Beate Wagner	SMBC	Apologies
Assistant Director Children's Services	Kate Bradley	SMBC	Present
Head of Commissioning for Learning	Bern Timings	SMBC	Present
Finance Manager (Children's Services)	Sarah Cheale	SMBC	Absent
Senior Accountant (Children's Services)	Ruth Barnett	SMBC	Present
Accountant (Children's Services)	Steve Fenton	SMBC	Apologies
Assistant Business Manager / Clerk	Emma Stoney	SMBC	Present

Item	Minute	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>1.1.</b>	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
<b>1.2.</b>	Apologies were received from Janice Hiorns, Lynda Mackay, Steve Fenton and Beate Wagner.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meetings on 27 March 2025</b>	
<b>2.1.</b>	The minutes of 27-03-25 were agreed and approved as an accurate record.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
<b>3.1.</b>	Antoinette Fisher confirmed all actions from the previous minutes had now been completed. Antoinette had shared information via Kate Bradley regarding Solihull Academy directly with Stephen Steinhaus and this was also sent out via Headlines to all.	
<b>3.2.</b>	Stephen still had concerns around the approval process for reports agreed in principle at Schools Forum. Antoinette agreed we need to be accurate in our processes and reporting.	
<b>3.3.</b>	Antoinette acknowledged the separate special school cohort review report from Jane Friswell had since been shared on the extranet and via Headlines, as part of	

	<p>the wider Education Strategy Plan but requested that this specific report be circulated in due course to all members with minutes from this meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: arrange distribution of special cohort review report to all members.</b></p>	<b>ES</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>LA update including DSG Management update – Bern Timings</b>	<b>BT</b>
<b>4.1.</b>	<p>Bern advised the HNB outturn will be shared more fully at next Forum meeting in July for closer scrutiny once signed off by Cabinet, Update on current High Needs budget spend to date and forecast position including progress on and DSG MP cost saving/ avoidance measures will be shared at every subsequent forum and FWG as a standing item.</p> <p><b>ACTION: High needs block outturn to be reported at next Forum meeting: 10.07.25</b></p>	
<b>4.2.</b>	<p>Key information was shared as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Regular reporting at meetings to take place from September onwards regarding monitoring, tracking of spend and what current spend is for the HN block</li> <li>b. Initial draft mitigations relating to 2025-26 will be brought to July's forum meeting, with a focus on having more special school places within borough and how that rolls through and impacts on the HN budget - developing practical solutions and providing more information on special transport out of borough as well.</li> <li>c. Work underway on CAIPE Scheme (collaborative approach to improving peoples' experience) matching schools funding, as part of the wider Education Strategy Plan (ESP).</li> <li>d. Refresh of the all-age efficiency strategy with more focus groups examining principles and efficiencies when needing to expand existing schools or new build. There are falling birth rates affecting some primary schools but there are also peaks in secondaries, with associated housing complexities.</li> <li>e. Plan in Autumn term to speak directly with schools on principles of decisions and strategy, examining local area pressures.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.3</b>	Officers were asked that when looking at efficiencies, the tangible impact on school budgets should be examined – particularly in relation to more complex children requiring support in schools and what tangible outcomes might look like, i.e. speeding up referrals, having more children in schools getting early access and providing better value for example.	
<b>4.4</b>	Work is underway on a new data dashboard focusing on KPIs, creating a more robust financial reporting system including additional narrative explaining for example, how quickly EHCPs are processed with outcomes.	
<b>4.5</b>	Performance is monitored at SLT every month but that this needs to be more dynamic so real time comparisons can take place. Attendance data is still being benchmarked against out runs from 2023.	
<b>4.6</b>	<p>Jameel Mullan, Head of EPAS is working on his dashboard to make it more dynamic and this will be shared in due course. It was agreed that this type of information be provided initially to SSSAB, then feed into Schools Forum when available.</p> <p><b>ACTION: ensure dashboard data on attendance be shared at future SSSAB meetings, then follow through into Schools Forum.</b></p>	
<b>4.7</b>	Land for the free school has been approved, with Heads of terms now completed and returned to DfE. Sir Allan Wood has been commissioned to support on this project together with a letter provided by the previous Leader of SMBC. The free school is one of the core mitigations of DSG management plan over the next 3 years, with a more realistic completion now of 2028 with expected build costs of between £15-£18 million.	
<b>4.8</b>	SMBC have received £2.5 million of high needs capital funding, but this was clearly not going to be enough. The government would be announcing a White	

**JM/BT**

<p>4.9</p> <p>4.10</p> <p>4.11</p> <p>4.12</p> <p>4.13</p> <p>4.14</p> <p>4.15</p>	<p>Paper soon with the expected focus to be on inclusion and special needs children being educated in local schools. Could this be how SMBC approaches the need for additional places? Kate Bradley is worried that falling rolls in London, with a number of London schools currently empty, may be feeding the narrative of this paper.</p> <p>Officers were asked if decisions would be made quickly and advised that there are statutory legal process to be followed of several months in the opening of any new provision so couldn't open new recourse provisions immediately. SMBC would work with other LAs on their approach; what processes they've followed; and how effective they have been, together with associated costs.</p> <p>Officers were asked if The Heights was at maximum capacity and advised they were following a year-by-year opening. Bern Timings shared some complexities in working with the trust and that the school had been on their own journey, with some misunderstanding and mismatching of needs but wanted to be crystal clear that the approach and scope moving forward, would be more aligned. Current plan is to increase places from 64 admissions this year, rising to 80 in 2026/27 and up to 120 by 2027/28.</p> <p>Financial information provided in Mark Firmstone's Finance Working Group report on an in-year deficit was referred to and members asked if there was updated data available in terms of the mitigations put in place.</p> <p>Bern advised that this information would be provided at future Forum meetings</p> <p>Mark Firmstone, Chair of Finance Working Group requested more granular detail on findings as opposed to simply sharing information via Headlines and that this be made available to Finance Working Group members. Bern added that financial outturn information would also be made available at the next Finance WG meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: financial funding data including outturn information be shared with next Finance Working Group (17.06.25).</b></p> <p>Kate suggested inviting Daria Silva, Programme Manager for the DBV project who is overseeing the ESP be invited to attend the next Finance Working Group to share more information on the work being done. Antoinette added that Bern was examining admin support for future Forum and associated meetings and this would tie in nicely together.</p> <p><b>ACTION: invite Daria Silva to Finance Working Group on 17.06.25 to discuss findings.</b></p> <p>Officers were asked what type of special schools were needed – what was the analysis showing? Bern advised that breakdown by need, reviewing any problem areas and how to address them would form part of the wider communication together with principles and decisions, planned from September 2025. Kate added that there are two paths driving need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. families seeking support from the independent sector - the Heights was created due to a familiar independent sector chain being used regularly</li> <li>b. Children in mainstream schools requiring special support and trying to find suitable placements.</li> </ul> <p>The independent sector doesn't typically cater for those children with severe learning difficulties, but rather those with autism.</p> <p>Members queried slow progress with the free school and decisions being delayed on other support required until the Autumn term as being potentially too late.</p> <p>Bern advised that discussion on what avenues could be explored in addition to the need for the free school, would be tabled for the July 2025 Forum meeting, with draft mitigations being presented sooner if possible. Antoinette suggested creating a specially commissioned Forum group to work alongside SMBC officers on this.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Antoinette and Bern to discuss commissioning a possible Forum sub-team, post meeting.</b></p>	<p>BT/RB/ES</p> <p>BT/ES</p> <p>BT/AF</p>
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4.16	<p><b><u>Additional comments from members:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. At least four children being kept in nursery as they had no place available elsewhere and they would remain in nursery as long as funding was available. Parents won't let their children go into mainstream primary and primary won't accept them either.</li> <li>b. A special school was shrinking primary provision and expanding secondary as that was where the need currently was.</li> <li>c. There had been discussion on early intervention at the recent SSSAB meeting, identifying a real gap regarding children being used to smaller settings, then having to transition into ones that are much larger and not being ready. Discussion needed to take place between infants and juniors regarding those pupils that weren't ready to transition.</li> <li>d. A non-verbal child was currently on a part-time timetable in a split classroom and had been in a holding position for 3 years and the Headteacher was concerned as to what would happen at Yr 6. Families were wanting their children to be educated locally with siblings and friends but that this was becoming increasingly difficult, given need.</li> <li>e. The needs of mainstream children were so far away from those of special needs children right now, impacting on limited teaching resource/staff being available for mainstream pupils.</li> </ul>	
4.17	<p>Kate confirmed that solutions should be sought together: that we needed to be realistic and decide where appropriate funding ultimately went, to make the biggest impact.</p> <p>Antoinette acknowledged that schools were solution focussed and that this should be celebrated.</p>	
4.18	<p>Ruth Tennant advised that a formal appointment had been made to Rasheed Pendry – aka Nick Pendry, current Deputy Director of Wandsworth Borough Council as the new Director of SMBC Childrens Services, commencing mid-August.</p>	
4.19	<p>Nick Pendry will be responsible for both arms of Childrens Services moving forward and will be arranging appointments with schools in due course.</p> <p>Beate Wagner current Director of Children's Services will remain with SMBC a little longer - involved in the ILAC (inspecting local authority children's services) with a report due out in the Autumn.</p> <p>Ruth also advised that Councillor Karen Grinsell was now Leader of the Council and would remain responsible for the Children's portfolio. Antoinette expressed gratitude to Councillor Grinsell, as she had already invested much time looking into education and listening to what Schools Forum had to say.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Financial update – Ruth Barnett</b></p> <p>5.1. Ruth Barnett introduced herself to members as the new Senior Accountant for Education and explained she had been focusing on DSG and Children's Services during the current term but was also supporting core financial areas, working with Steve Fenton and Ian Murray.</p> <p>5.2. Ruth advised her team should be examining 2026-27 now and undertaking this at least one year in advance. Her plan is to have things in place so that detailed conversations about mitigations, efficiencies and actions are discussed well in advance before decisions required and budgets set. Finance is currently behind at the moment but are motivated to move forward as quickly as possible.</p> <p>5.3. Officers were asked if there was a cut-off point as to when a decision would be made on whether the free school should actually go ahead?</p> <p>5.4. Bern advised they are still awaiting a decision. SMBC had looked to possibly build themselves but this was going to be too expensive and appreciated how frustrating the delays were. The biggest mitigation would be saving £4 million year on year once the free school is up and running but this might be a slow burner whilst</p>	

<p>5.5.</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p> <p>5.8</p> <p>5.9</p>	<p>focusing on additional priorities. Kate added that £4 million would only half the annual deficit at best as the deficit continued to increase based on demand.</p> <p>Kate added that removing the free school from the DSG plan was risky given that the DSG management plan and all mitigations require sign off from the DfE which means they share some of the responsibility. Kate was therefore recommending keeping the plan as is.</p> <p>Officers were asked why pupils weren't receiving EHCPs, so therefore places weren't then full. It appeared that SMBC was celebrating having less EHCPs than other LAs.</p> <p>Bern responded that expansion of one primary classroom could cost at least £700,000 to £1 million. There was much less HN capital available than mainstream capital, based on how the government had set things up. He confirmed SMBC is working with schools to look at where expansions can take place and what can be achieved on site. Special schools are usually at capacity already but expanding them costs significantly more. Establishing what's required and where, would then inform discussions with the DfE. Kate added that EHCP numbers are growing year on year. A multi-agency panel make decisions and some are declined. However 90% are agreed an EHCP. There are also wait lists for families wanting special school rather than resource-based provision.</p> <p>Antoinette added that special schools are bursting at the seams and in danger of losing that special element by overfilling classes and not meeting needs of current pupils and are reviewing satellite provision all the time.</p> <p>Mark Firmstone attended a recent seminar on funding and advised that there is additional funding available from the DfE that whilst schools can't apply for it, LAs can. Officers confirmed they weren't aware of additional funding.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Mark to forward potential new ways of obtaining funding via DfE, to Bern/Kate following this meeting.</b></p>	<p>MF</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1.</p> <p>6.2.</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p><b>Attendance Enforcement Code of Conduct update – Jameel Mullan</b></p> <p>Jameel Mullan, Head of EPAS reported on proposed changes relating to their regular annual review of attendance code of conduct for enforcement, in readiness for the new academic year. This consultation went out to schools and the Police on 12 May 2025 and runs until 23 May 2025 with a link to relevant documents shared with schools via Headlines.</p> <p>The framework and a new code of conduct handbook are in the public domain and have also been shared via the Education extranet to schools - with a suite of documents available that can be shared with parents, for example on penalty notices.</p> <p>A couple of absence examples were highlighted to reflect the type of information available to schools through the handbook and Jameel also shared that the team have worked with a collection of schools through SSSAB. Headteachers ultimate have the say when authorising absences and EPAS will work collectively with schools on any decisions that are made.</p> <p>In line with the national attendance framework that LAs are expected to adopt, work with and implement in order to strength SMBC's code of conduct and take a support-first approach when handling leave of absence requests, the following changes were recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the amount of time parents need to inform schools of a leave of absence request. Currently parents must provide 2 weeks' notice. This is an advisory only but recommended increasing this to 4 weeks - providing an opportunity for settings to have conversations with parents and also liaise with schools of siblings if needed.</li> <li>Following application and then non-payment of a penalty notice, reduce the referral period from 8 weeks to 20 days, once a child has returned from an unauthorised period of absence. It is recommended that schools should refer cases to EPAS within 20 days - enabling EPAS to have sufficient time</li> </ol>	



6.5	<p>to process and avoid any cases being withdrawn from court because they are out of time and have extended beyond the allotted 6-month period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. EPAS will work more closely with schools on supporting school meetings for those schools that have attendance below the national average for the first two terms of an academic year. This has also been extended to support/include schools above the national average to understand what works with families. No additional funding available to cover this support but EPAS is committed to working with those children who are severely absent, where schools have identified they have exhausted all other options to support the families. Additional support from EPAS will then be provided.</li> <li>d. Feedback on attendance will be fed back to Solihull schools rather than any independent service involved, in order to maintain GDPR.</li> <li>e. Increase the improvement/monitoring period on Notice to Improve from between 3-6 weeks to a fixed period of 6 weeks: ensuring sufficient time for attendance to improve and be maintained.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions/comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. With an expensive advisory team - what is the actual impact of improving attendance across the borough and is it working?  <i>Using live data shared directly with the DfE last week there was 93% attendance overall for all Solihull schools - in line with national average. Primary attendance was 95% across Solihull compared with national average of 94.7%. Secondary was 91.7% compared to national average of 91.3%.</i></li> <li>b. Have these figures improved? Yes.</li> <li>c. There could be disparity between North/South schools and averaging doesn't always reflect any areas/schools that may be falling below average.  <i>Whilst the EPAS team focus on statutory services and enforcement, the new framework developed over a three-year cycle, reflects when second or third offences occur with the same family, leading to a potential criminal record. EPAS are developing support with targeted schools below the national average, families and communities: utilising the family hubs around the borough demonstrates a commitment to supporting schools improve attendance, engaging directly and understanding what the barriers are, then rolling this support out to other schools too. Specific work is underway with heads of north schools to bridge the south divide/disparity.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Jameel to feedback at future meeting on how EPAS can demonstrate adding value on attendance data outside of the enforcement framework.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. How effective is enforcement/prosecution?</li> <li>e. What is the tangible impact and how is this built in?</li> <li>f. Schools already understand some of the barriers to attendance, have extensive knowledge and are skilled already.  <i>EPAS are limited in what they can do but have been working with specific schools and families to understand more and ensure that other parties, for example social care and health are brought in when required. EPAS cannot work by caseload as that's not the remit of their team.</i></li> <li>g. Why 6 weeks not 4 weeks for the improvement/monitoring period for Notice to Improve? Often parents lose evidence before the deadline or it sits outside of the 10-week window. Our setting has experienced massive fines but parents don't appear to be bothered.</li> <li>h. Free childcare has been offered at one setting - in an attempt to improve attendance.  <i>Natalie Jones, EPAS Lead on this area since October 2024 added that comparatively SMBC is quite far ahead compared to other LAs. Referrals</i></li> </ul>	JM/BT
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	<p><i>are generally being turned around within 5 days but many are rejected due to lack of evidence. 6 weeks was chosen as the deadline to support collation of evidence in a timely manner and to secure penalty notices but also some parents can sustain attendance for 3-4 weeks but it slips again. 6 weeks is a more succinct period of time and supports serial poor attendance. Penalty notices can be issued from week one/week two if needed. Data was provided in recent Headlines regarding number of penalty notices issued and the team are examining if EPAS are getting referrals too early or late (then likely rejected). Schools are encouraged to discuss the referral first before submission to check the evidence is appropriate and accurate – for instance spelling needs to be accurate. The team are now seeing second and third repeat absences for several families that will impact on attendance in the new academic year, with higher penalties applied and possibly also some criminal records come September 2025.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Whitsun Bank Holiday week (around 26 May each year) has an impact on school attendance. <i>Schools are encouraged to speak to each other when they educate siblings, as referrals are often made from one school but not the other - or the referrals are misaligned and not arriving at the same time. An app and improved technology support schools with their attendance referrals. The handbook has been updated to reflect changes and provide more context. With high turnover of staff in schools EPAS are offering network meetings and early training and schools are encouraged to come to these. Excluded pupils who may have been seen in public for instance, can now also receive penalty notices and this has been added to the code of conduct for enforcement.</i></li> <li>j. Anecdotally this support service is working really well and it's reassuring to get advice/recommendations before submitting referrals.</li> <li>k. Secondaries obtaining primary attendance data this year has been invaluable, as it helps identify and support transition.</li> <li>l. What conversations are being held with early help and MASH? <i>The pilot projects at two Family Hubs have involved early help and MASH. It is hoped drop-in sessions can roll out to all Family Hubs in September, enabling parents to get advice and support from a variety of professionals with early help/MASH involved, focusing on the child in particular. Parents have been able to access support before removing their child from school and the type of support required has been identified, as well as aiming to prevent/avoid prosecution or a relationship breakdown with schools.</i></li> <li>m. Is there an opportunity to broaden early help support for those parents not actively engaging? Being told it is simply an attendance issue is not helpful, when social care needs may also be involved. <i>This is termed educational neglect – Jameel and Sarah Whittle (Head of Service – Social Care, Early Help) are working on implementing expected social care reforms due soon to support this area.</i></li> <li>n. Gina Godwin added that educational neglect was terminology used frequently in early years settings and was highlighted in every training course delivered through their setting, if members wanted more information.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Jameel to feedback on social reform implementations at future Forum meeting.</b></p>	JM/BT
7	<b>Cabinet Member update – Councillor Karen Grinsell (Leader)</b>	
7.1	<p>Cllr Grinsell joined the meeting straight from the Solihull Chamber of Commerce Expo. On behalf of Schools Forum, Antoinette congratulated Councillor Karen Grinsell on her recent appointment as Leader of the Council.</p>	

7.2	Cllr Grinsell explained that whilst her broader background was in health and other areas, she had wanted to remain responsible for the Education portfolio and continue to work with Schools Forum and its members.	
7.3	Cllr Grinsell was pleased that local businesses at the Expo were keen to get involved in supporting Education with work experience, apprenticeships and other employment opportunities as not everyone was academic and therefore this type of support was vital for Solihull young people.	
8a	<b>Finance Working Group report (06-05-25) – Mark Firmstone</b>	
8a.1	Mark provided a report before the meeting and highlighted that a £55,000 fund is available each year to those settings with traveller children. Reminders are sent via Headlines. Schools need to submit a spreadsheet showing how they intend to use the money, with evaluation required at end of term. Usually only a core group of schools apply but available to all settings that have traveller children.	
8b	<b>SSSAB verbal update (07-05-25) – Louise Minter</b>	
8b.1	<p>Lou Minter provided highlights from her latest SSSAB meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Questionnaire/consultation possibly coming out to schools in September regarding discussion on 6 equal terms – current half term has been very short. Andrea Beckford invited to Autumn 2 SSSAB meeting.</li> <li>b. Any spend on Education Strategy Plan has to make the right impact. All activities within the plan come from the DSG management plan, headteachers task &amp; finish groups, DBV commissioned work, as well as other feedback through scrutiny.</li> <li>c. Next Headteacher Partnership scheduled for 26 June 2025.</li> <li>d. Lou is spending time later this week with Claire Potts (School Improvement) and Clare Hawkes (Governor Training) regarding parental complaints for a session planned in October's HP meeting, with support from legal. Darren Gelder is investigating union involvement/support.</li> <li>e. Deputy Headteachers' Conference scheduled for 3 July 2025 – morning focus on information shared with heads then afternoon as a practical session.</li> </ul>	
9.	<b>AOB</b>	
9.1	<p>Claire Smith asked how much SEND funding can schools be expected to receive on average next academic year as decisions can't be made on staffing if figures not yet known – especially across year groups. In particular – how much is allocated in top-up funding and how much for excessive SEND funding – labelled 'bucket'. Mark Pratt reiterated greater clarity on funding was required, particularly if there is downturn in other budget areas, are schools expected to re-distribute funds. Antoinette agreed this was within the remit of Forum to discuss.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Bern/Kate and Antoinette to discuss ASAP providing additional SEND financial information to schools via Forum.</b></p>	AF/KB/BT
9.2	<p>Antoinette advised that there was a review of Forum membership underway. She was grateful for attendance from those that came and thanked everyone.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Antoinette/Emma to review membership of Forum ready for next academic year.</b></p> <p>Meeting ended at 11.20am.</p>	AF/ES
10	<p><b>Date of the next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 10 July 2025 at 9:30am – 11:30am in Room 1, Civic Suite.</li> </ul>	