Schools Forum 17th September 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Children's Services Data and Information Systems Team

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update in respect of the work of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team, which is supported by funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant through the Combined Services Budget.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 9 September 2013.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for "Combined Budgets" under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant; it is conditional that the Schools Forum agrees the amounts involved and ensures that there is an educational benefit to the pupils.

4. It is a requirement that the local authority provides an annual outturn report to the Forum in respect of the combined services budgets.

5. From 2013/14, in line with the DfE School Funding Reforms, any budget deductions under the Combined Budget provision must not exceed the amount deducted for the previous funding period. This means that no new Combined Budgets can be allowed and those approved before 2013/14 must be constrained in value to the budget set aside in the previous funding period of 2012/13.

Action for Schools Forum

6. To note the cost effectiveness of the data quality work carried out on behalf of Dudley schools, which is supported by the Combined Services Budget funding, in relation to the Directorate's Children's Data and Information Systems Team.

Karen Cocker
Children's Services Finance Manager
3 September 2013

Schools Forum 17 September 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Children's Services Data and Information Systems Team

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update in respect of the work of the Children's Data and Information Systems team, which is supported by funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant through the Combined Services Budget.

Background Combined Services Budget

2. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds the Schools Budget. The Schools Budget is a combination of centrally retained budgets together with the ISB (Individual Schools Budget).

3. The DSG is a ring fenced grant and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined by the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2012*.

4. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for "Combined Budgets" under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Prior to 2013/14 it was conditional that the Schools Forum agreed the amounts involved and ensured that there is an educational benefit to the pupils*.

5. From 2013/14, in line with the School Funding Reforms, any budget deductions under the Combined Budget provision must not exceed the amount deducted for the previous funding period. This means that no new Combined Budgets can be allowed and those approved before 2013/14 must be constrained in value to the budget set aside in the previous funding period of 2012/13.

6. For 2013/14 Schools Forum has exercised its authority to allocate central funds of £30,700 to support the work undertaken on behalf of schools though the Children's Data and Information Systems Team based in the Children's Services Directorate.

Background to the Dedicated Schools Grant Funding For the Children's Data and Information Systems Team

7. In 2009, a report was presented to Schools Forum which outlined the additional statistical data collection work to be undertaken by the Children's Data and Information Systems Team on behalf of Dudley schools. The report requested funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support this additional work and Schools Forum approved this request under the combined services budget powers.

8.   Since that date the Team has continued to manage the statutory data collections required to be completed for all schools, including new areas. For example, the pupil premium grant funding was introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2011 for which the DfE collect the data from the free school meals indicator on the School Census. For 2014/15 this grant is estimated to be £15m in total for Dudley schools.

9.   This report therefore updates Schools Forum on the work performed by the Children's Data and Information Systems Team and highlights areas where the financial support from the Dedicated Schools Grant is being used effectively to ensure that Dudley schools receive the maximum grant funding from the DfE or Central Government.

The Role of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team

10. The Children's Data and Information Systems Team currently support over 30 service teams within the Directorate of Children's Services, other teams across the Council Directorates, all Dudley maintained schools and all Dudley children's centres. This is through the development of key management information systems and facilitating the transfer of data between Dudley schools and numerous partner organisations.

11. In addition, the Team is responsible for completing numerous statutory data collections for the Department for Education and they also perform the following roles for the Department of Education on behalf of Dudley MBC and Dudley schools.

   - **Edubase Co-ordinator** – this role is acting as the main contact and 'System Administrator' for the the DfE's 'Edubase' system which holds the details of all schools and education establishments across the country.

   - **Lost Pupil Database Co-ordinator** – this role is acting as the main contact and 'System Administrator' for the DfE's 'Lost Pupil Database' which records children that have moved from a school and haven't yet been allocated or attending a new school.

   - **School-2-School Co-ordinator** - this role is acting as the main contact and 'System Administrator' for the DfE's 'School-2-School' Database' which holds files on all children that have moved from a school to another school.

   - **Key-2-Success Co-ordinator** - this role is acting as the main contact and 'System Administrator' in Children's Services for the DfE's 'Key-2-Success' Database' which holds files on pupils Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 attainment results.

12. The services delivered by the Children's Data and Information Systems Team are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 - What Services do the Children's Data and Information Systems Team Offer Schools?

Information System	Description
Management Information Systems	Developing and supporting the following systems:- • Tribal Admissions system • Tribal Schools Admissions Module (SAM) • Centris Free School Meals system (soon to be replaced by the Tribal Free School Meal system)
Statutory Data Collections	Managing the completion of the following statutory data returns to the Department for Education:- • School Census • School Workforce Census • Consistent Financial Reporting
Data Transfer Support	Facilitating the transfer of child related data from and to other schools and partner organisations:- • Pupil data exchange with Connexions • Pupil data transfers, where pupils move between schools • Key stage data transfers (using Common Transfer Files)
Schools Information	Maintaining and publishing schools contact information on the Council intranet and Dudley Council internet

13. With reference to Table1, the Dedicated School Grant funding approved by Schools Forum supports the information systems work in relation to the:
   • Statutory data collection (Schools Census/Schools Workforce Census).
   • Tribal Synergy system development (Co-ordinated Admissions).

13.1 **Managing the Statutory Data Collection Required for Schools – School Census.**

Role of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team in the Schools Census Return

   • The termly School Census is co-ordinated and submitted to the DfE by the Children's Data and Information Systems Team on behalf of all Dudley schools. The role of checking that the data is complete and accruate will ensure that grant funding, such as the DSG and Pupil Premium, is maximised on behalf of Dudley schools.

Purpose of the Schools Census

- The School Census is a statutory return for all maintained nursery, primary, secondary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, local authority (LA) maintained special and non-maintained special schools, academies (including free schools) and city technology colleges in England. Service children's education schools may also return it on a voluntary basis.

- The School Census collects information about individual pupils and information about the schools themselves, such as their educational provision. The individual pupil information collected includes free school meal eligibility, ethnicity, special educational needs (SEN), attendance and exclusions.

- The data is widely used by the DfE's policy divisions, other government departments, LAs, external agencies and educational researchers.

- Analysis of individual pupil records supports the drive to raise standards, the accurate targeting of funding and the monitoring and development of policy.

- For example:

  - pupil numbers are used for funding LAs and schools, including the Dedicated Schools Grant and the pupil premium, and contribute to the school and college performance tables exercise;
  - pupil numbers will be matched with data from the School Workforce Census to monitor pupil-to-adult ratios;
  - information on class sizes, pupils with statements, pupils with SEN but without statements, free school meals, ethnicity, absences and permanent exclusions is used to monitor the government's social inclusion policy.

- Without this information it would be very difficult for ministers, Parliament, central and local government, pressure groups and the public to monitor government policies and their effectiveness.

- The data is collected via COLLECT, the department's centralised data collection and management system for education.

13.2 Schools Workforce Census

Role of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team in the Schools Workforce Census Return

- The School Workforce Census is a statutory annual return to the DfE, which is collated by the Children's Data and Information Systems Team on behalf of Dudley schools. The role of checking the data will ensure that any statistical data subsequently produced by the DfE is accurate.

- **Purpose of the Schools Workforce Census**

  - The DfE and its partners agreed a Data Sharing Protocol in February 2004. In keeping with the principle that data is collected once for use many times, the school workforce data is to be matched to other sources of data for statistical, research and policy purposes.

  - Individual records will be matched to records from the Database of Teacher Records (DTR), and other sources. This will enable analyses to be undertaken by status, length of service, and type and subject of initial teacher training qualification.

  - Matching teacher data to DfE school databases will enable analysis by school type, phase of education, and other school characteristics.

  - Further matches to other data sets may be made by the DfE from time to time for statistical, research and policy purposes.

13.3 Co-ordinated Schools Admissions

Role of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team in the Schools Admissions Systems Development

  - The Children's Data and Information Systems team have been instrumental in developing the on line admissions systems for Dudley through the Tribal Synergy (Admissions) software. This system was introduced in September 2010 and enables schools to see their new applicants on-line via the Schools Admissions (SAM) website. Schools can therefore see up to date information rather than being sent out of date spreadsheet information.

  - A further recent development is the move away from CENTRIS for the Free School meal module. This module was operated though RM (Research Machines) but due to the age of the system, this software is no longer being developed and as Dudley is the only local authority using this product, the module has been replaced by a Tribal Systems solution.

  - The advantage of the new Tribal Free School Meal software will be that schools will be able to login to the SAM system and see the pupil's up to date free school meal status in real-time, without having to contact the Free School Meal team, which has caused delays and uncertainties for schools in the past.

Purpose of Schools Admissions

  - The co-ordinated admissions scheme relates to the duty for Local authorities (LAs) to co-ordinate the secondary transfer admissions for all maintained (non fee paying) schools. Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Staffordshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire LAs and Education Walsall have agreed to co-ordinate the admission process for admission to secondary schools.

  - From 1st September 2007 Dudley borough residents were able to either apply online or complete a paper application, which is available on request from the School Admissions Service. 87% of applications are now received on line in Dudley.

- Some of the benefits of applying online are:
  - It is quick and easy to use;
  - You can apply 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
  - There is no risk that your application will be lost in the post;
  - You will receive an email confirmation that your application has been received;
  - You can change your application up to the closing date by contacting the School Admissions Service;
  - It is safe and secure;
  - You will be notified of the outcome of your online application after 2pm on the 1st March 2013.

- The School Admissions web page provides links to school web sites and other web pages giving information about schools (such as the Ofsted site www.ofsted.gov.uk). It also includes a copy of the admissions information booklet.

School Census Workshops

14. Before each termly School Census return, the Children's Data and Information Systems Team hold workshops for Dudley school administrators to attend. The purpose of these workshops is to discuss the completion of the return and highlight those data quality issues which have been present in previous returns.

15. Typical data quality issues include:
    - Pupils missing from the return (i.e. where an incorrect end date may have been entered, this will remove a pupil).

    - Number of hours recorded incorrectly for nursery pupils (i.e. the maximum hours are 15 per week – a combination of errors have been identified) – in the October 2012 census collection there were 370 children records found to be in error by the team.

    - Free school meals data is inaccurate or missing (i.e. schools data records do not always correlate with the Directorates data collection for free school meals and frequently schools are under claiming pupils in this category even though the pupil maybe taking a free meal at school) – in the October 2012 census collection there were 78 children records found to be in error by the team.

    - Duplicate pupil checking exercise (i.e. this is a national check with other local authorities where a name and date of birth appears twice on the data base).

    - In the October 2012 census collection there were <u>667</u> data quality queries corrected by the Children's Data and Information Systems team.

16. The data analysis trends are highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2 – School Census Quality Data Checks

Census Trends

Legend: 🟢 Low 🟡 Medium 🔴 High

Data Quality Issue	Jan-10	May-10	Oct-10	Jan-11	May-11	Oct-11	Jan-12	May-12	Oct-12
Funded Hours	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
Hours of Setting	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High	Medium	High
Dual Registration	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Part Time Indicator	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Guest Pupils	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
Missing Exclusions	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Children incorrectly recorded on Current role	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
Incorrect Entry dates	High	Low	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
Children from Private on-site nurseries not given new entry date when joining school reception	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High
Part Time Indicator	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Guest Pupils	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Incorrect Year Groups Vs Age	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High
Incorrect FSM Entitlement	High	Low	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
English as Additional language	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High	High

The Importance of Pupil Premium and Free School Meals reporting through the School Census

17. The free schools meal data populated through the Schools Census return is used by the DfE to derive statistical data for pupil premium grant funding. It is important therefore that this data is recorded accurately otherwise grant funding will be lost.

18. The government believes that the pupil premium, which is additional to main school funding, is the best way to address the current underlying inequalities between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers by ensuring that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most.

19. The pupil premium was introduced in April 2011 and is allocated to schools to work with pupils who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years (known as 'Ever 6 FSM').

Funding for Pupil Premium

20. Pupil premium was payable to schools in 2011/12 at £488 per disadvantaged pupil. This has steadily increased each financial year and for 2013/14 is £900. Recent DfE announcements have indicated that this will increase to £1,300 per disadvantaged pupil by 2014/15 for primary schools; the value for other schools has not been released yet.

21. In most cases the pupil premium is paid direct to schools, allocated to them for every pupil who receives free school meals. Schools decide how to use the funding, as they are best placed to assess what additional provision their pupils need.

22. Local authorities are responsible for looked after children and make payments to schools and academies where an eligible looked after child is on roll

The Effectiveness of the DSG Funding in Support of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team work

23. The Dedicated Schools Grant for Dudley per pupil for 2013/14 is £4,459 for mainstream and £3,651 for nursery (1fte).

24. The pupil premium grant per disadvantaged pupil for 2013/14 is £900, rising to £1300 in 2014/15 for primary pupils.

25. Therefore assuming that the Team only correct 8 mainstream pupils on the Schools Census from 45,000 eligible pupils recorded, or 24 pupils with free school meals from 12,000 recorded then the team can be seen as cost effective in their role in recovering the DSG contribution of £30,700. There are many other benefits of the service provided by the Team, however, this report concentrates on the funding aspect associated with the working of the team.

Finance

26. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2012.

27. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

28. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
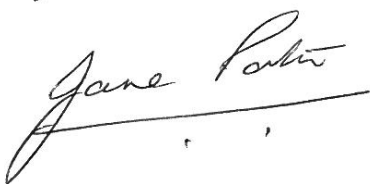
Law

29. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

30. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

31. Schools Forum to note the report in respect of the cost effectiveness of the data quality role of the Children's Data Information Systems Team in the maximisation of Dudley's grant funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Pupil Premium.

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