

Notes of the Parent Focus Group Meeting
Held on 21 March 2017

In attendance, J Brownlie, D Gallimore

Mr Brownlie delivered a presentation about the National Fair Funding Formula. Copy attached.

Matters arising from subsequent discussion:

1 Do we attract any additional funding due to the building being a listed building?

We don't think so due to the historical nature of it being owned by The Foundation but we will check.

2 Have grammar schools been targeted particularly with this proposed funding?

Although there is much news coverage about grammar schools, this is really not the case, perhaps it is just because grammar schools tend not to get as much money for 'deprivation'.

3 Collaboration is a really good positive move but how will this work effectively with schools who aren't grammar schools and whose outcomes might be different?

Our natural partner for that reason is North Halifax but there are many other courses where outcomes have been good – particularly the more vocational courses. Calderdale College for example and their BTEC range, Brooksbank and Hipperholme for their PE and Dance options. Deputy heads meet regularly to discuss provision at various schools to find ways of making subjects viable – such as Music.

4 If PP is post code related can we reduce our geographical area from where we take students?

PP is not related to post code: it is based on free school meals. In the past, an element of 'deprivation' (based on post code) has been included in the per pupil amount and the current consultation is looking at this.

5 With regard to the 11+ exam, do we have the information on their application so we would know if they are a PP student and could we select more PP students?

We have moved towards this with a revised entrance exam. The exam is designed to attract students who have more natural ability than having been extensively 'prepped' to pass the test and also PP students who have achieved a sufficient mark to be considered for a place are moved up the list.

6 Young students should go into primary school to try and encourage young students to take the test.

7 Is PP money ring fenced?

Yes, it is a fixed amount and we have to declare how we spend it on the school website.

8 Why was the number of people being admitted to school increased?

The number was increased from 155 to 180. These students are now in year 8. This was done as it created efficiencies in teaching and curriculum although it is a challenge to the building itself.

9 Will we be lowering our standards if we encourage more Pupil Premium students? Parents choose this school because it is a grammar school and for the outcomes it gives.

The school would not want to see a deterioration in standards and the impact of the new entrance exam will be monitored closely by governors.

10 Schools should ask for help and seek a financial contribution from parents, some may even give more.

Some schools have gone down this route and we may even have to consider this in the longer term. However, we are mindful that not everyone will contribute, that the views of those present might not represent the parent body as a whole and some might find a contribution difficult.

Other suggestions from parents included providing parents with a reading list of those items which are compulsory and those which are more optional and perhaps they might be obtainable at a better price by the school buying in bulk. Perhaps have more on-line resources rather than books. A recycling of text books ought to be encouraged.

Thank you to everyone for their very useful contribution and discussion points.