CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM
Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on Thursday 2 July 2026 at 8.00am at Ebor Business Centre

Present:
Dave Hewitt (Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representative) Chair, Paul Laycock (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), Jemma Dunne (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), Gail Brown (Academy Representative), Sam Bradley (Academy Representative Substitute deputising for Andrew Daly), Ian Yapp (Academy Representative), Jordan Cairns (Academy Representative Substitute deputising for Helen Winn), Ken Merry (16-19 Representative)

*The meeting was quorate with **8 Representatives** present (quorum 40% of the total membership equating to 6 members).*

In attendance:
Maxine Squire (Assistant Director, Education, Skills and SEND, CYC), Richard Hartle (Principal Accountant, CYC) Dan Bodey (Head of Inclusive Education, CYC) and Helen Marshall Groot (Head of Governor Services, CYC, Coordinator and Clerk)

1. **Welcome & Apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from; Cllr Robert Webb (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education), Mark Hassack (Academy Representative)
Substitutes for members unable to attend were welcomed.

2. **Minutes of the School Forum Meeting 7 May 2026**
Previously distributed.

The minutes of the meeting held 7 May 2026 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly noted as approved.

3. **Matters arising not on the agenda**

There were no matters arising.

4. **SEND Reforms**

Maxine Squire provided a verbal update on the SEND Reform plan. As previously explained the local authority was required by DfE to submit a local area SEND Reform

plan by 19 June 2026. It was confirmed that York had submitted ahead of deadline on 18 June and was awaiting feedback on approval. There were no financial consequences attached to the approval as there was no deficit on the DSG therefore funds would be received for Experts at Hand (EAH) and additional SEND capital had been expected to be received by the end June.

Health had commenced with the recruitment of additional Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) and Occupational Therapists (OT) specifically to do work for the EAH team. Lynne Johns, from the Specialist Teaching Team, was working on an EAH model similar to the learning support model. Geraldine Jackson, Principal Educational Psychologist (EP), had released job adverts for four Associate EPs and it was expected that additional Senior EP support would also be added. It was hoped that new roles would be in place by October half term.

A forum member asked if there was confidence that were qualified colleagues to recruit. Maxine Squire explained that in conversations with Health colleagues, there was confidence that there were sufficient number of individuals with the relevant qualifications to meet the need, potentially just currently not working in professional therapy roles.

A forum member asked if the idea was that the EAH would work in the neighbourhoods. Maxine Squire responded that the intention was that the EAH programme would work and track against neighbourhoods.

Further workstreams would be established as part of the delivery plan. EAH would also include early years (EY) and post-16. Similar to schools, EY would also be receiving extra inclusion funding and a formula would need to be identified to devolve that out. Shared foundation partnerships would need to be refreshed.

It was noted that Dan Bodey would be leading a strand on inclusive education and the establishment of inclusion bases as part of the plan.

It was agreed that a visual/graphic organiser of the local area SEND reform plan and the different workstreams in the context of the neighbourhoods would be helpful. Dan Bodey added that it would also be important to communicated the intent behind the plan, clearly outlining the expectations and the reason why money had been used in that area. Maxine Squire explained that the first three years of the plan was the foundation stage, commencing work that would allow to shift the system away from Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Maxine Squire explained that inclusion bases were a high-profile element of the reform plan and establishment of these would be targeted from next cache of SEND capital to support any school that did not currently have one. In response to a question it was highlighted that the plan must be on the assumption of no additional revenue.

5. **Disapplication update / Review**
Previously distributed

In the previous discussions following Schools Forum's disapplication approval, there had been agreement that a large percentage of the money generated would fund additional AP places at Inspire. All feasibility studies had been completed in preparation for expansion and capital funding had been agreed. A decision had been taken to front load recruitment in order to upskill staff in preparation, therefore recruitment would be undertaken in autumn with first funding being received in January 2027. An admissions panel would be held in February 2027 and then staff would go to schools to start a supported piece of work around transition to Inspire.

A forum member asked how long KS3 pupils would access the provision. Dan Bodey explained that the expectation was that KS3 pupils would be short turnaround placements of one term, with the intention that the provision was successfully utilised to then return to mainstream school. KS4 would be a permanent cohort on roll and there was further discussion regarding support post-16 access to vocational pathways through early links with college.

A forum member asked how the places would be funded sustainably in future, or whether there was a presumption of continued request for disapplication. Maxine Squire explained that the initial investment was pump priming money to create the conditions for change long term. Careful profiling of the HNB would be required.
There were opportunities for close working between the Inspire and Danesgate, and it was important to note that there was equity between the two in terms of expectations and cost per pupil. In response to a question it was noted that the cost per place was £25k. It was noted that the 18 places at Inspire would allow allocation of two places per secondary school, and Dan Bodey explained that this was in line with a model seen at North East Leeds Inclusion Partnership. There was substantial upscale of investment in Inspire and it would be important that Schools Forum and YSAB maintained an overview.

A discussion followed around places for KS4 pupils, one pupil would take one allocated place for two years, preventing others from benefitting. The Tier 2 support would be important for identification for those pupils that might require something longer to give more long term visibility on cases that were escalating.

In terms of admissions, a transparent process would be required and Inspire wanted to maintain independence. The proposal was for a shared panel to consider applications; Head of Inspire, three colleagues from Excel Trust, two secondary school headteachers and one Local Authority, with veto sitting with the Head of the centre.

A forum member commented that the timeframe seemed to be ambitious with regards planning and building and asked if there was confidence that Inspire would be able to deliver. Maxine Squire explained that there was confidence that the commitment could be delivered with the intention to have the building open by Easter 2027. Staff would be in place from September in order to start work out in schools as an initial step.

Sustainability would be mapped over time as the neighbourhood model began to kick in and primary schools would have a view of pupils who may struggle in KS3.

A forum member asked with regards funding for KS4 if a Y10 pupil place in the first year was covered by the 0.5% disapplication, who would be responsible for funding the second year. Maxine Squire explained that funding for year two would then come from the HNB . It was noted that once places were filled the centre would be at capacity.

A forum member asked whether 18 places was sufficient to allow another part of the system to work differently. Maxine Squire explained that the remaining element of funding from the disapplication was devolved resource to the four neighbourhood clusters aimed at preventative work in primary. The capital could be used to purchase assistive technologies or resource could be pooled to develop a specialist inclusion base in one school in a neighbourhood area and work collaboratively on that supported by EAH and the LSH. The model would be built on the team around the school approach.

A forum member asked whether the EAH would be working with pupils with EHCPs. Maxine Squire explained that the EAH model was intended as a preventive layer of support to reduce the need for ECHP. The LSH would run alongside, both therapy and specialist teaching elements coming together. At neighbourhood level data dashboards would support in getting a better idea of the profile of need in areas.

A discussion followed about understanding the direction and impact for individual schools that develop enhanced provision. Schools with specialism became a magnet for parents wanting a place in the ERP for their child. The expectation from Ofsted that every individual school should have and some form of inclusion base was highlighted. Inclusion standards across city would need to be agreed as a partnership to determine what inclusive education looks like. There would be a graduated response which would include specialist bases as well as inclusion bases to accommodate a variety of different interventions. It was acknowledged that it would complex.

6. **School Improvement Commissioning**
Previously distributed

An annual update was provided on the use of historic commitment funding around school improvement. Following the move to the national funding formula (NFF) the improvement funding had been reducing annually at 20% a year. The funding had historically been used through YSAB to support schools causing concern through focused school-to-school support arrangements. The need for this had reduced over time and it had been agreed at YSAB to look at whole city issues rather than individual support. Some examples including the recent work streams on improving attendance and poverty proofing were overviewed.

A forum member noted that £85k had been provided into Danesgate to support a model for outreach work, and it was agreed that it would be important to get a full report back from Danesgate on the progress of that work.

From the remaining budget, the majority would go to YSAB to support the ongoing work to make a difference to the system as a whole, and £25k was allocated to LA maintained schools school improvement support. In autumn term there would be an open tender commissioning a school improvement partner approach. Individuals would require relevant experience including badged Ofsted inspectors and recent experience of school leadership. Ideally this would bring experience beyond York in order to provide new ideas.

7. **Health neighbourhood plans**

Maxine Squire provided a brief overview of the neighbourhood model in the local health system, aggregating GP resources and establishing four neighbourhood health centres for the provision of more efficient acute care as York hospital was now at capacity. These neighbours were supported by governing boards and it was important to agree how education could be better represented. It was a positive step to go back to education and health in same defined localities. Health had a funding commitment into the wellbeing service and it was important to consider shaping the wellbeing workers service in order to get good value and not duplicating existing work. This would involved identifying the gaps and what the service could do that was distinctively different. Feedback was welcomed.

8. **DSG Outturn**

Previously distributed

Richard Hartle presented the paper outlining the outturn of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2025-26.

As highlighted in the paper expenditure of £201m represented an overspend of £1.4m resulting in a net deficit carry forward of £665k. With regards the Safety Valve (SV) funding, the target had been to get to a balanced position which was not achieved, however the DfE were content that the LA had done what had been asked. From the original projection of a £35m deficit, SV had provided £17m and the work conducted had managed the rest down. In 2025-26 the in-year deficit was £1.2m after SV contribution, highlighting that the underlining deficit was therefore £3.2m.

A forum member commented that the £225k committed to fund high needs at Inspire would add to the overall deficit moving forward. It was noted that the funding for the Inpsire places was being generated by the disapplication and as previously discussed, the Inspire expansion and the other work within the SEND Reform plan was crucial in reducing overall pressure on the HNB over time.

Mrs Hartle also highlighted the annex 2 showing the LA maintained schools outturn balances. At the end of 2025-26 there were several schools in deficit position in final revenue balance and for the first time, there was a total net deficit balance for the LA. Work was being undertaken with those schools with the most challenging deficit budgets.

9. **Infant Class Size funding**

Richard Hartle provided a verbal update following discussions at the previous meeting. Reviewing other local authorities, there were limited number that offered the funding therefore difficult to find a workable model. As the current allocation could not be sustained, a revised approach would be brought to forum in autumn which would include a formula more realistic to the funds available.

10. **BAFS update**

Richard Hartle provided a brief verbal update. Work on the review was ongoing and he continued to meet with School Business Manager colleagues across secondary, primary and LA. Proposals would be reviewed in autumn term with the working group ahead of a paper to come to schools forum with recommendations.

A forum member asked when any changes would be implemented from. Richard Hartle responded that it may depend on how much system change was needed. If it was not significant then changes would be from April 2027, however if a complete rewrite of process was required then this may be delayed.

11. **Schools Forum forward plan**

YSAB update
Danesgate outreach update
Quarterly monitoring of SEND Reform plan
BAFS review recommendations
ICSF modelling
Neighbourhood planning
2027-28 budget position

12. **Agree proposed dates of meetings for the next academic year**
    1. *Thursday 12th November 2026*
    2. *Thursday 4th February 2027 – this would be too late for Council Executive sign off of the budget. Alternative required.*
    3. *Thursday 6th May 2027 – local election day. Alternative required.*
    4. *Thursday 8th July 2027*

It was agreed to keep meetings held at Ebor, starting at 8am, with York College as an alternative venue if required.