

SCHOOLS FORUM

Membership of the Schools Forum

Purpose of the Report

To determine Schools Forum membership categories in the light of previous discussions.

To ensure that the WBC Schools Forum reflects requirements for balanced membership, reflecting schools' phases and status.

Suggested Action

Members are asked to confirm views on the balance of Forum membership in all categories, in order to allow for a fully representative meeting in December. Specifically, the questions to be addressed are:

1. balance of membership (table 1&2)
2. size of Forum (...plus table 3)
3. inclusion of 6th form numbers in the calculation of balance
4. membership and voting
5. governor representation
6. duration of terms of office

It is recommended that

1. Membership reflects table 1
2. Table 1 is easier for transition than table 3 size
3. 6th form numbers are included
4. School members all vote; non-school membership/voting remains as currently
5. Governor members may be proposed by phase/status of schools
6. 3 years terms of office apply, with rolling end dates

Summary

A review of Forum membership was called for following the change in status of Waingels College from maintained to academy. As a result a paper was presented to the October meeting, examining current membership, pupil numbers and their implications for Forum membership. The conclusion is that there should be a re-balancing between phases as well as status.

Illustrations of issues raised in the October discussion are given below. Constitutionally this is an LA decision which has been delegated to the Forum in Wokingham's case.

Supporting Information

Requirements and their implications

The requirements for Forum membership were set out in the previous paper (annexed). This identified a need to reconstitute Schools Forum as set out in table 1, assuming the current number of 20 school members remains, and recognising requirements for minimum representation of identified categories.

Table 1: Suggested Forum schools representation based on current numbers

	Maintained	Academy
Primary	10	0 (rounded down)
Secondary	2	5 (rounded up (inc Charvil))
Special	1 (minimum)	0
PRU	1 (min)	
Nursery	1 (min)	

The pupil numbers giving rise to this were:

Table 2: Distribution of WBC Pupil Population: May Census 2015

	Maintained	Academy
Primary	14459 57%	128 (inc. Charvil) 0.5%
Secondary*	3162 13%	7063 28%
Special*	266 1%	0
Total *includes 6 th form	17887 71%	7191 28.5%

These matters gave rise to discussion at the October meeting, in particular focusing on

1. The overall size of Forum and non-school membership
2. The inclusion or otherwise of 6th form numbers in the calculations
3. Numbers of members and votes
4. Governor representation

Size of Forum

There is no regulatory requirement on forum size; the current size of 27 is above benchmarks. As an illustration, table 3 shows a possible schools' membership based on an attempt to halve numbers where possible.

Table 3: Possible smaller Forum: schools representation

	Maintained	Academy
Primary	5	0 (rounded down)
Secondary	1	3 (rounded up (inc Charvil))

Special	1 (minimum)	0
PRU	1 (min)	
Nursery	1 (min)	

The effects of this are

- a total of 12 schools members;
- a precise balance is less achievable (Secondary Academy representation @ 2/3?);
- an increased proportion of special/PRU/Nursery (which can't be reduced);
- the choice between professional and governor representation is more difficult;
- a minimal reduction in non-schools members is required in order to secure the required 1/3 : 2/3 balance. Thus the 7 representatives would need to reduce to 6 (or arguably 6 votes if we presume membership means voting).

Non-schools members currently comprise:

Children's Services	1	1
Early Years Forum	2	1
Oxford Diocese	1	1
RC Diocese	1	1
WBC Member	1	1
14-19 provider	1	1

Of these, there has been inconsistent attendance from some quarters. Bodies represented have been approached about this. Possible approaches to reduction if it were a priority would be to reduce Early Years Forum votes to 1, and/or to arrange diocesan voting as we currently do with WBC special schools, with 1 vote per 2 and rotating membership. Non-schools members are appointed by the LA.

Should 6th Form numbers count?

Numbers above relied on all pupils including 6th form. Points made in October were noted in the minutes, around:

- EFA funding of DSG, and SFA of sixth forms;
- The position of post-16 pupils in special schools;
- The impact on pre-16 management of post-16 pressures for secondary schools;
- What regulations prescribe.

Sixth form numbers are 2741 ie slightly lower than the maintained secondary figure representing 13% of the total (table 2). Removing them would suggest a need to reduce the secondary representation by slightly less than 1 (table 1) or 0.5 (table 3), split between maintained and academy schools. That would represent a challenge worthy of Solomon, solving which would not change the overall primary /secondary balance proposed.

The requirement for 14-19 partnership representation in Forum suggests that the will of parliament was that post-16 matters should be discussed and represented at Schools Forum, as with the implications of requirements for nursery and pre-school representation. Given also the marginal effect of 6th form numbers it is proposed that they be included in the calculations.

Membership and voting numbers

Forum members share an interest in the health, including financial health, of the local schools system as a whole; they are system leaders. In that spirit, decisions by consensus have properly dominated those taken by voting. However, we need clarity about this. Members of the House of Commons, Wokingham Borough Council and Norton St Philip Allotment Society may all vote. Not so in this Schools Forum; therefore we need to be satisfied that (a) voting numbers meet requirements for membership and balance, and (b) there is an advantage in having additional persons routinely "in attendance". It is proposed that voting numbers reflect table 1 or a variant such as in table 3.

Governor Representation

Wokingham has an established model of governors contributing to Schools Forum; that appears to be a strength. It was noted previously that an outcome in the current membership is an anomalous representation of phases, which arguably should be considered as we review the balance of membership. Guidance steers us towards appropriate representation of the balance of pupil numbers/schools, and appears to leave the nature of representation to the bodies represented.

On that basis we should aim for phase/ status representation by heads or governors, to be determined by phase representatives, rather than governor representation per se. Where there is a difficulty in identifying a governor able to stand for the phase, then that phase determines a school employee from the phase or a governor from another phase at their discretion.

Duration of Terms of Office

No duration is currently specified. Representation is routinely limited in such a way in other fora. Forum members might wish to support a rolling 3 year term, such that changes are staggered and continuity preserved. In the first instance, and in order to secure that staggering process, existing schools members with the longest history of membership might have a one or two year term, according to their length of existing tenure.

Annex: October report

SCHOOLS FORUM

Membership of the Schools Forum

Purpose of the Report

To review the membership of the 'schools' and 'academies' categories of Forum membership in view of the increased number of academies (and reduced maintained schools) in the borough.

To review the balance of representation between education phases for school representatives

Suggested Action

Members are asked to consider the balance of Forum membership in all categories, and to make views known prior to a confirmation of the position in November.

Summary

A review of Forum membership was called for following the change in status of Waingels College from maintained to academy. This has involved a consideration of pupil numbers in order to judge the correct balance of representation. That also identified a need to consider the balance of phase representation (primary/secondary/special) as well as status. The conclusion is that there should be a re-balancing between phases as well as status.

Constitutionally this is an LA decision which has been delegated to the Forum in Wokingham's case.

Supporting Information

Requirements

The membership requirements of Schools Fora are set out in the School Forum regulations. Requirements for representation in Wokingham (given that there are schools in all these categories) are:

- academies at least 1
- schools/academies at least 2/3 in relation to non-schools members
- maintained schools at least 1 head; at least 1 secondary; at least 1 governor
- special schools at least 1
- nursery schools at least 1
- PRUs at least 1
- 14-19 partnership at least 1
- Early Years providers at least 1

The LA is *required* to secure that primary, secondary and academy schools' representation is broadly proportionate, having regard to the number of *pupils* registered at them.

The LA has a *power* to determine that the number of members representing schools in a particular category must be broadly proportionate to the total number of *schools* in that category when compared with the total number of schools.

The LA has a power to appoint non-schools members for a term of office it determines. Schools members are elected by members of the relevant group. Determination of their term of office is not specified.

Wokingham Schools Forum Constitution

Wokingham's Schools Forum comprises 27 places. 7 are for 'non-school' members, 20 for 'schools' members. Details are in Table 1, which also illustrates the agreement resulting in numbers of votes allocated by membership category. Thus the proportions of votes are 16/6, also consistent with the requirement for a two-thirds majority for schools. There is no prescription as to the size of Schools Forum.

Table 1: Membership of Wokingham Schools Forum

Representatives	Current composition	
	Members	Votes
Maintained Nursery	1	1
Primary Maintained	7	4
Secondary Maintained	2	2
Academies	3	3
Special School/PRU	2	2
Governors	5	5
Non-school – Children's Serv's	1	1
Non-school – Early Years Forum	2	1
Non-school – Oxford Diocese	1	1
Non-school – RC Diocese	1	1
Non-school – WBC Member	1	1
Non-school – 14-19 provider	1	1
TOTAL	27	23

Primary and nursery school representatives (see annex) are all maintained school headteachers; secondary schools are covered by three maintained school posts recently filled by headteachers, with one vacancy following Waingels' assumption of its academy status, as well as three academy school posts, filled by a Headteacher, a governor (vacant) and a business manager. On that basis current schools' representation (including vacant posts) is in Table 2, and voting in Table 3:

Table 2: Balance of Forum membership in Wokingham

	Maintained		Academy		Phase total
Primary	7+1 (nursery)	HT	0	HT	
	1	Gov	0	Gov	
	9	Total	0	Total	9
Secondary	2	HT	1	HT	
	2	Gov	1	Gov	
			1	SBM	
	4	Total	3	Total	7
Special/PRU	2	HT			
	2	Gov			
	4	total			4
Grand total	17		3		20

Table 3: Distribution of votes

	Maintained		Academy		Phase total
Primary	4+1	HT	0	HT	
	1	Gov	0	Gov	
	6	total	0	total	6
Secondary	2	HT	1	HT	
	2	Gov	1	Gov	
			1	SBM	
	4	total	3	total	7
Special/PRU	2	HT			
	2	Gov			
	4	total			4
Grand total	14		3		17

The balance of posts is slightly towards primary, that of votes towards secondary. The special sector appears well represented. Since the regulations require a match with both phase and status of schools by pupil numbers, an illustration of pupil numbers follows.

Table 4: Distribution of Pupil Population: May Census 2015

	Maintained	Academy
Primary	14459 57%	128 (inc. Charvil) 0.5%
Secondary	3162 13%	7063 28%
Special	266 1%	0
Total	17887 71%	7191 28.5%

Applying these percentages to Wokingham's Schools Forum would make a number of changes. There are 20 schools members, of which 3 are required by regulation: 1 nursery, 1 special and 1 PRU. With 17 remaining schools members, the overall "best fit" representation would be as follows:

Table 5: Implied Distribution of Membership

	Maintained	Academy
Primary	10	0 (rounded down)
Secondary	2	5 (rounded up (inc Charvil))
Special	1 (minimum)	0
PRU	1 (min)	
Nursery	1 (min)	

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On that basis the Wokingham Schools Forum would require changes in representation between phases and types of schools, balanced between headteachers and governors according to the wishes of each group. It is suggested that given the lateness of this report that a final decision is considered at the next meeting.

Alan Stubbersfield

Annex

Schools Forum membership - October 2015

School representatives			Votes	
Nursery Head	Phil Armstrong	Ambleside Centre	1	
Primary Head	Brian Prebble	Rivermead Primary	4	7 primary heads representing 7 clusters.
Primary Head	Eileen Rogers	Gorse Ride Junior		
Primary Head	Elaine Stewart	Aldryngton Primary		
Primary Head	Ali Brown	Nine Mile Ride Primary		
Primary Head	Helen Ball	Polehampton Infant		
Primary Head	Sally Hunter	Wescott Infant		
Primary Head	Louisa Gurney	Emmbrook Junior		
Secondary Head	Ginny Rhodes	St Crispins	2	Secondary representatives are elected by the Secondary Heads Federation.
Secondary Head	<i>vacancy</i>			
Academy Head	Derren Gray	The Piggott	3	Academy/Free School representatives are elected by the proprietors of the Academies.
Academy Business Manager	Janet Perry	Holt		
Academy Governor/trustee	<i>vacancy</i>			
Special Head	Liz Meek	Addington	1	Election by agreement between the two schools.
Special Head	Dominic Geraghty	Southfields		
PRU Head	Mary Rome	Foundry College	1	
Governor	John Bayes	PRU – Foundry College	5	Governing Bodies are asked for volunteers.
Governor	Nick Dyer	Special School: Addington		
Governor	Ian Head	Aldryngton		
Governor	<i>vacancy</i>	Secondary – vacancy		
Governor	Paul Miller	Southfields / St Crispins		
Non-School Members			Votes	
Children's Services	Matt Marsden		1	
Early Years Forum	Charlotte Wilkingson Clare Sheppard		1	

Oxford Diocese	Anne Andrews		1	
RC Diocese	<i>vacancy</i>		1	
WBC Member	Ian Pittock		1	
14-19: Bracknell & Wokingham College	Stephen King		1	
Observers				
Education Funding Agency, Maintained Schools Division	Funding Reform Team			