

Rotherham Schools' Forum – constitution/membership review of School Members to ensure that all phases and school types are proportionately represented

Initial findings for discussion by the Rotherham Schools' Forum, 4th March, 2016: -

Some relevant sections of the Education Funding Agency's 'Schools Forum: Operational and good practice guide' (March, 2015) (attached for information):

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- Para 16 – The Schools Forums Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members but allow a considerable degree of discretion in order to accommodate local priorities and practice;
- Para 27 (under the Schools Members headings) – Whatever the membership stricture of schools members on a schools forum, the important issue is that it should reflect most effectively the profile of education provision across the local authority to ensure that there is not an in-built bias towards any one phase or group.
- 17 – no maximum or minimum size but need to have full representation for various types of school;
- 18 – Must have schools members, academies members and non-school members. Schools and academies must have 2/3 of the total membership;
- 18 – The balance between maintained primary and maintained secondary and academies must be **broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers** in each category;
- 18 – There is no requirement for academy members to represent specific primary and specific secondary phases, **but it may be encouraged to ensure representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers**;
- 24 - Maintained special schools, nurseries and PRUs must be represented;
- 25 – There can be headteacher and governor representatives within the Schools Member section.

Rotherham's current model and an alternative structure for consideration / discussion: -

Rotherham's current model: -	Potential model for consideration: -
Geographical learning communities model	'Phase / school type model'
16 learning community School Members who organically represent primary/secondary/academy/maintained phases (in addition to non-school members)	Proportionate representation from the phases and school types; Must be based on pupil numbers in each phase and school type. (in addition to non-school members)
Strengths include: - All areas of the Borough are represented; This is how Rotherham is organised (note paragraphs 16 and 27 above). Good attendance at RSF meetings from a range of stakeholders	Strengths include: - Can be annually reviewed to ensure that the pri/sec and acad/maintained proportions are correct. School Members are presenting their phase, not local area
Weaknesses include: - Not guaranteed to proportionately represent pupil numbers in pri/sec, adac/maintained; Can make voting issues difficult / or lead to only a small number of Reps voting on a decision (can be mitigated by consultation as per SiFD decision, but outcome would not be binding on the RSF members)	Weaknesses include: - May mean large geographical areas of the Borough do not have a representative – will those schools become isolated/ marginalised? Each area of the Borough has different demographics and these may not be fairly represented.
Practicalities: - Arrangements must be made for representatives to attend in the absence of the main representative – what does this do to the proportions?! Currently there are too many Non-Schools members (based on 16 learning communities there should be 10/11 at maximum, there are currently 13, although some could be re-classified as Schools' Members (Governor Reps) and bring the number into line)	Practicalities: - Depending on numbers of seats assigned in this model, Rotherham may have to reduce numbers of non-school members to ensure that school members have 2/3 of the seats

Based on the data from the October 2015 school census (the January 2016 census has not yet been finalised) Rotherham's education sector looks like: -

Phase / setting	No. of settings	Number of pupils on roll	%	Seats on the RSF is alternative model adopted =?
Primary Maintained	60	16,212	65.5%	
Primary Academy	34	8,513	34.5%	
Totals	94	24,725 (57% overall)	100%	
Secondary Academy	11	12,874	70%	
Secondary Maintained	5	5,465	30%	
Totals	16	18,339 (43% overall)	100%	

Current non-schools' members are: -

- Special Schools (Para 24 - statutory member);
- Nursery Schools (24 - stat member);
- PRUs (24 - stat member);
- Teaching School Representative;
- PVI Early Years Rep (P46 stat member);
- Primary Governor (Para – 25 can be classed as a Schools' Member);
- Secondary Governor (25 - can be classed as a Schools' Member);
- Teaching Trade Unions Rep;
- Support Staff Trade Unions Rep;
- Diocese of Sheffield Rep;
- Diocese of Hallam Rep – unfilled;
- School Business Managers Rep;
- Colleges (stat member – para 45).

Future developments?: -

There could be changes in the way Rotherham's education sector is organised – e.g. SEMH partnerships, multi-academy trusts, and these could necessitate restructure of the Schools' Forum.

Engagement and consultation: -

Make better use of technology to improve engagement and consultation with all Schools – such as voting buttons on Outlook, the RSF Digest, learning community meetings and others...

Timescale for any changes to the structure and representation: -

Traditionally the RSF has nominated Chair, Vice-Chair and Reps at the April meeting for the following academic year. This could change to the October meeting to more closely align to the school-year.

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