



# **Annual Report of the Barnsley Schools Forum (2024/2025)**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the annual report of the Barnsley Schools Forum. Here you will learn more about the work which the Forum undertook during 2024/2025 to ensure all our schools and settings in the Borough were equipped with the funding to improve teaching and learning standards and provide a supportive environment for all children and young people at every stage of the National Curriculum.

The Forum is part of a broader landscape whose shared vision is to help develop a local, inclusive system which enables all children and young people in the Borough to achieve their potential, irrespective of their circumstances and characteristics. A key responsibility of the Forum is to help ensure that the funding provided to schools and settings is sufficient, effectively used and provides value for money. For that reason, the Forum's membership is designed to reflect the range of schools, settings and other interested parties, and to ensure that what at times can be difficult decisions are made in the best interests of the whole of the local system. This is the role which the Forum will continue to perform during 2025/2026.

Whether you are a parent, school leader, teacher, governor or someone with an interest in how schools are funded, I hope you find this annual report interesting and informative.

Michael Sanderson

*(Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)*

## Local Guide to the Barnsley Schools Forum

In Barnsley, we have produced a *Local Guide* for members of the Forum, together with anyone who may be interested in learning more about its work. A copy of the Local Guide may be viewed via the Barnsley Schools Forum Web Page at:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/schools-forum/schools-forum-members-protocol/>

The Local Guide outlines the following information:

- The role and responsibilities of the Forum as set out in the Schools Forum (England) Regulations (2012)
- Representation and membership of the Forum
- The Forum's Constitution and Terms of Reference
- Nominations and appointments to the Forum
- Arrangements for meetings of the Forum and how the public can get involved.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Barnsley Schools Forum please e-mail:

[Admin-GovernorsServices@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:Admin-GovernorsServices@barnsley.gov.uk)

## Issues Considered by the Barnsley Schools Forum During 2024/2025

As part of its role both as a consultee and decision-taker in matters concerning education and school funding, the Forum considered the following:

- Regular monitoring of Schools and Early Years Education Budgets (2024/2025) including variations in expenditure; school balances and reserves.
- Regular monitoring of High Needs Block funding, including Barnsley Council's management plan for tackling the deficit and bringing expenditure. This included consideration of the Council's involvement in the Department for Education's '*Safety Valve*' intervention programme, aimed at closing the current deficit in the High Needs Block budget and to help develop a more sustainable system for meeting the education needs of vulnerable young people in accordance with the Government's national Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan and *Road Map*, published earlier this year.
- As part of this, quarterly reports continued to be considered on the sufficiency of education provision for children and young people with special educational needs, together with the measures taken to ensure more school places are created within local mainstream and special settings as well as to support their wellbeing whilst at school and improve attainment.
- The outcome of Barnsley Council's consultation with schools on proposed changes to the local schools funding formula, including the criteria for awarding funding to schools and settings which operated from multiple or split sites.
- The Borough's funding settlement for schools during the period 2024/2025, including allocations to the Schools Block; Early Years Block and High Needs Block, together with arrangements for the continued funding of school improvement activity and both statutory and historic commitments including school admissions, education welfare, eligibility for free school meals, pension costs and teaching staff cover.

## Membership of the Schools Forum

This work could not have been completed without the dedication and commitment of the Forum's membership. This year we have recruited additional representatives who will add considerable value to the Forum's work, during 2025/26. Therefore, I would like to welcome the following new members:

- Councillor J. Moyes: Local Elected Member
- Mrs J Milliner: LA Maintained Primary School Governor - Athersley North Primary School
- Mr G Wild: Springwell Learning Community and Chair, Greenacre Special School
- Mrs K Adamski: Carrfield Primary Academy
- Mrs V Pejhan-Sykes: LA Maintained Secondary School Governor
- Mr N Leeder: Secondary Academy Governor/Representative

Details concerning the current membership of the Forum can be found in the Local Guide or on the Schools Forum's Web page at:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/schools-forum/>

## Performance and Critical Success Factors 2024/25

The Barnsley Schools Forum does not have a specific set of its own critical success factors or indicators of its own performance, but does perform a valuable role in supporting the following outcomes within the Council.

LEARNING BARNSELEY	Polarity	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Early Years and Childcare settings rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted	High	98.00%	96.20%	95.00%	95.70%	96.00%
Secondary School Attendance	High	91.00%	86.30%	92.50%	90.90%	91.00%
Primary School Attendance	High	94.10%	93.60%	94.90%	94.90%	94.70%
Number of Suspensions in all Schools (Primary)	Low	6500	1876	2886	4944	6832
Number of Suspensions in all Schools (Secondary)	Low	500	105	179	244	372
Number of Visits to Libraries (Digital & Physical)	High	170000	159980	185447	165353	175917
Care Leavers aged 19-21 engaged in Education, Employment or Training	High	55.00%	55.60%	65.00%	62.30%	63.50%
Percentage of Children on SEN Support in Schools	High	12.20%	12.58%	12.58%	12.70%	13.00%
Proportion of Educational Settings judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted	High	93.00%	94.50%	94.50%	94.44%	94.32%
Take up of 2 year old Childcare for those eligible through Economic Criteria	High	77.00%	78.00%	78.88%	77.86%	77.40%
Young People aged 10 - 17 years entering the Youth Justice System for the First Time	Low	29	8	16	17	22

## **Early Years & Childcare Settings rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted**

Although we are currently below the agreed target for Barnsley, there have been many new providers (46) that are awaiting their inspection which we expect to achieve “Good” or “Outstanding” in the coming months. There has been 1 Day Nursery which was rated “Inadequate”, and another rated “Inadequate” provider has been reinspected to “Good”. The service are working with providers to support their Early Years settings in comparison to the previous quarter. The result of this is that we have less requires improvement and inadequate settings (4 RI and 2 inadequate) and we have seen 2 childminding settings close due to retirement and resignation.

## **Secondary School Attendance / Primary Attendance**

Our efforts and ambition in relation to our co-produced “Every Child in School Every Day” Plan demonstrates some pleasing statistics at year end, with secondaries being broadly in line with the national picture (which sits at 91.80%) and Primary Schools reporting at 94.70%, which is 0.2% below target. 4 of the 11 secondaries are in line or above the national picture, with 3 schools at 90% and 4 schools achieving 89%. When considering our primary schools there are some schools reporting attendance upwards of 96%.

## **Number of Suspensions in Schools**

The year end overall suspension target for the full academic year was 7000 across all schools.

Issues around the automated data feed between schools and Barnsley’s case management system have been identified which has resulted in discrepancies between school data and that held locally. As such suspensions data cannot be reported in full due to inaccuracies resulting from an incomplete data set. This issue is currently with our provider awaiting resolution. It is important to note that from September 2025 all our schools and academies have agreed for the Local Authority to access the DfE WandE Attendance system. This will mean that there is access to live data going forward.



## **Looking Forward: The Barnsley Schools Forum's Work Programme for 2025/2026**

In compliance with its statutory role, the Forum will continue to act both as a consultee and decision-taker on matters relating to schools funding in the Borough. This will be combined with its role as a key constituent within the local schools' sector as part of developing a schools' system which meets the needs and helps fulfil the aspirations of all children and young people in Barnsley. A copy of the Forum's proposed forward plan for 2025/2026 is outlined in the Appendix A to the annual report.

### **Feedback**

If you have any comments on the annual report, please let us know by e-mailing:

[Admin-GovernorsServices@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:Admin-GovernorsServices@barnsley.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### Barnsley Schools Forum Forward Plan 2025/2026

Date of the meeting	Issues to be considered
17 July 2025	(a) Schools Budget (2024/25) Year-end Outturn (b) Schools Budget (2025/26) Latest Position and Evaluation of Risks (c) Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 4: 2024/25) (d) Review of Membership of the Barnsley Schools Forum
23 October 2025	(a) Schools Budget: Latest Forecast Position (Quarter 1: 2025/26) (b) Schools Funding Settlement and Arrangements for 2026/27 (c) Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 1: 2025/26) (d) Annual Report of the Barnsley Schools Forum (2024/25) and Local Guide
9 December 2025	(a) Outcome of the Local Authority's consultation with schools on proposed changes to the Local Schools Funding Formula ( <i>this matter will require a vote and the meeting must be quorate</i> )
22 January 2026	(a) Schools Budget Out turn Report (Quarter 2: 2025/26) (b) Schools Funding: Budget Allocations (2026/27) (c) Schools Block Dedicated Budget (2026/27) (d) Early Years Block Dedicated Budget (2026/27) (e) Central School Services Budget Block (2026/27) (f) Provisional Education Outcomes in the Borough (2025) (g) Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 2: 2025/26) ( <i>items' c, d and e may require a vote and the meeting must be quorate</i> )

Date of the meeting	Issues to be considered
17 March 2026	(a) Election of the Vice-Chair for the Schools Forum (b) Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 3: 2025/26) (c) High Needs Budget Block (2026/27)

### Barnsley Schools Forum Future Planned Dates:

SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS:		
Date and Time of Future Meetings	Venue	Deadline for papers
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2025 2.00pm	Room 1, Barnsley Town Hall.	Friday 5th December
Thursday 22nd January 2026 2.00pm	Reception Room, Barnsley Town Hall.	Friday 9th January
Tuesday 17th March 2026 2.00pm	Boardroom, Westgate Plaza.	Wednesday 4th March