

East Sussex County Council Schools Forum

Friday 12 January 2024

08.30

Remote Meeting

East Sussex
County Council



Agenda

Item	Heading	Paper	Lead	Item for
1.	Welcome and Apologies	N	Chair	Note
2.	Minutes of previous meeting 17 November 2023	Y	Chair	Approval
3.	Matters Arising and Declaration of Interests	N	Chair	Discussion
4.	DSG Budget 2024/25	Y	Ed Beale	Information
5.	Overview of High Needs Top up Funding Review	N	Nathan Caine	Information
6.	DSG Budget 2024/25 – Early Years	Y	Jane Spice	Approval
	AOB			

Next Meeting: Friday 10 May 2024, 8.30am, Venue Remote

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EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 17 November 2023

PRESENT

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)

Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)

Vicky Anderson (Catsfield CEP School)

Primary Governors

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)

Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School)

Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)

Secondary Governors

Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy) **Chair**

Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)

Kelly Johnson (UoBAT)

Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)

Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)

Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

Non School Members

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)

Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Alison Jeffery (Director Children's services)

Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education

Honor Green (BSD Finance)

Nathan Caine (HofEd SEND & Safeguarding)

Edward Beale (Acting Finance Manager - Childrens Services)

Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)

Kirsten Coe (Schools Funding Manager - Acting)

Gary Langford (Senior Manager - School Organisation and Admissions)

Rachel King (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (Note)

The chair welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance. Also welcoming new members, Emily Winslade, Sally Hill, Vicky Anderson, and Zoe James. Honor Green introduced herself to the group as she succeeds Sian Hedger as Head of Finance - Children's Services and Schools Finance.

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

No apologies.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 15 September 2023 (Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair and scanned to clerk.

3. MATTER ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Discussion)

3.1 Matters arising - none.
Declarations of interest - none.

4. Growth Fund/ Falling Rolls Fund (Approval)

4.1 Members were given an update on spend in the 2023/24 financial year and were asked for approval for funding in the 2024/25 financial year. Members were asked to vote to approve an allocation of £1,038,400 for the 2024/25 Growth Fund.

4.2 All members were asked to vote, and results are as follows.

4.3

Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'
12	0

5.0 DSG - Central School Services Block (CSSB) 2024/25 (Approval)

5.1 Members were provided an update on the CSSB allocations for 2024/25. Schools Forum were asked to note and approve the proposals.

5.2 All members were asked to vote, and results are as follows.

5.3

Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'
13	0

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 High Needs Top Up Funding working group.

Members were given an update on High Needs Funding to schools. Members were asked to come forward as Schools' Forum representatives to set up a working group to look at proposals, budgets, and allocations on HNB for next year 2024/25. Richard Preece is the Special Schools rep on the Forum, but the group require representatives from mainstream schools as well. More information and detail will be brought to the January meeting. The following members volunteered to be a part of the working group.

Vicky Anderson
Zoe James
Debra Vice-Holt
Emily Winslade
Kelly Johnson
Laura Cooper
Sally Hill

7.2 Verbal Update - Schools Finance

Members were given updates around schools' finance and funding. The error in the 2024/25 funding rates announced by the DfE. Tools that are sent out to schools have been revised and adjusted numbers sent out to schools. Making a lesser increase rather than a reduction. Impact to schools will vary.

Pay awards are going through this month to be paid in November. Information sent to schools to account for that. Grant funding to cover 3% of teachers pay award. Slight timing difference in that grant income has been paid out but the back pay will come through in November.

Teachers' pension 2024/25 5% increase to employers' contribution. DfE have indicated there will be additional funding to cover that.

Maintained schools having roll out of a new finance system. Project is going well and schools responding positively to new software.

7.3 A request was made for a forward plan for Schools' Forum to consult and get views in advance of voting for some items. It was agreed to provide a forward plan for year ahead, to give main headline topics, as some are standard and to indicate where voting is needed.

ACTION: Forward plan to be circulated to Schools' Forum members.

It was also requested that Schools' Forum papers are sent out more than a week in advance if possible.

Meeting concluded at 09:09 am

Next meeting - Friday 12 January 2023 08:30am. To be held on Microsoft Teams

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Report to: Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 12 Jan 2024

Report By: Alison Jeffery

Title: DSG Budget 2024/25

Purpose: To provide an update on the DSG budget for 2024/25

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Schools Forum are asked to note the DSG allocations for the Schools, Central School Services Block, High Needs and Early Years

1 Background

1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2024/25 is, like last year, allocated by the DfE into four blocks. Each block is subject to separate regulations as to eligible expenditure and the use of the four blocks is outlined below:

- **The Schools Block** comprises the funding which must be delegated to schools and academies through the Funding Formula. Maintained schools can agree to de-delegate budgets and these are spent on their behalf by the local authority. Subject to Schools Forum approval, there are a limited number of exceptions, the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund, which enable local authorities to hold this funding centrally. The funding for these funds goes to eligible schools and academies.
- **The Central School Services Block (CSSB)** is a block of funding that provides funding for Local Authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in maintained schools and academies. LAs' CSSB is split into funding for historic commitments and funding for ongoing responsibilities.
- **The High Needs Block** provides funding to support the provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years to age 25. This includes provision in maintained schools, academies, alternative provision, FE colleges and Independent providers, as well as supporting central spending on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities from their early years to age 25.
- The **Early Years Block** funds payments to early years providers in settings and schools and supports central spending on early years pupils.

1.2 Please note that regulations stipulate that Schools Forum approval is required for the CSSB (Approved 17 Nov '23) and the Early Years Block only. The other blocks are presented for information.

2. Appendices

2.1 The appendices below provide a breakdown of the DSG allocations:

- Appendix A - DSG Summary
- Appendix B - Schools Block DSG
- Appendix C – Central School Services Block DSG
- Appendix D - High Needs Block DSG
- Appendix E – Early Years Block DSG

3. Schools Block Funding

3.1 The Schools Block for 2024/25 is based on the October 2023 pupil census data and equates to £367.2m.

3.2 The DfE have allocated £16.2m more to the Schools Block compared to 2023/24. There are two reasons for this:

- 1 £11.8m relates to the previously separate mainstream grant now being added into the Schools Block.
- 2 £4.4m additional funding (£6.6m due to increase in National Funding Formula (NFF) rates offset by reduction in NOR (-£2.2m)

3.3 Growth and Falling Rolls Fund proposals were presented to Schools Forum at the Nov '23 Schools Forum whereby a request was made for the continuation of support for maintained schools and academies in respect of Key Stage 1 top up, additional classes, pre-opening costs and dis-economies of scale costs for new schools. No additional funds were requested for the falling rolls fund as funds are to be brought forward from 2023/24.

4. Central School Services Block (CSSB) Funding

4.1 At the Nov '23 Schools Forum meeting, the CSSB funding of £4.4m was discussed and approval was obtained by Schools Forum for the Local Authority's planned use of funding, which was to use £2.4m (On-going responsibilities), and to transfer the remaining funds of £2.0m (Historic Commitments) to mainstream Schools/ Academies.

4.2 The DfE have confirmed that £4.4m has been allocated to the local authority. (£2.4m to Historic Commitments and £2.0m to on-going responsibilities)

4.3 The £2.4m, will be transferred to mainstream Schools/ Academies in April '24.

5. High Needs Block (HNB)

5.1 The High Needs Block must fund all provision for children with SEND that is above and beyond that which is delegated to schools and settings through other formulas (e.g. pupil numbers, notional SEND budgets etc.). When allocated from the DfE, there are no divisions within this budget for different sectors and, therefore, all costs must be met within the funding envelop, which is determined each year by formula. It is important to note that the formula does not reflect the comparatively large number of pupils that ES has in Independent and Non-Maintained Special (INMS) schools, whose annual costs equate to a quarter of the entire HNB allocation, nor the high proportion of children specifically within special schools.

- 5.2 The total High Needs Block funding is calculated by the DfE and for 2024/25 is £87.0m which is an increase of £4.0m compared to 2023/24. The £4.0m increase equates to a 4.6% increase from 2023/24, which is a much smaller increase when compared to what was received for 2023/24 (where ES received an increase of 10.8% - 8.1m more than 22/23). Of the £4.0m increase, £900k relates to an increase in pupil numbers. The remaining £3.1m is linked to the broader formula indicators which are used to determine funding allocations.
- 5.3 The DfE have stated that special schools/ academies and alternative providers will continue to receive place funding at £10,000 per agreed place. As in previous years, the Local Authority has realigned agreed places at some schools and academies to more effectively reflect need.
- 5.4 In addition to the £10,000 per agreed place, Local Authorities must continue to allocate additional funding, to Special Schools/Academies, in relation to both place and top up funding. The methodology must be the same as for 2023/24 and again equates to an additional 3.4% per place (Based on £10,000 place funding).

Example:

Place Funding

Annual Place Funding for School A	Additional Funding (For the year)
100 Places * £10,000 (£1,000,000)	£1,000,000 * 3.4% = £34,000

- 5.5 The figures above represent the minimum required enhancement to top-up and place funding for special schools. Further funding for 24/25 will be considered through the High Needs Block working group alongside uplift requests across all providers.
- 5.6 For specialist facilities attached to mainstream schools, as per DfE regulations, the place funding will continue to be £6,000 for every occupied place and £10,000 for an unoccupied place. (Funding for occupied places is £6,000 per place because these pupils are also funded via the school's budget share.)
- 5.7 The High Needs Block working group will need to consider how we meet requests for increases to HNB funding from all sectors (mainstream, special and FE) as any increases will need to be met within the overall funding allocation for the county. This will also need to take into account the increase in costs in the INMS sector which have increased by over 20% this financial year.

6 Early Years Block

- 6.1 There are a number of changes to the Early Years Block. Appendix E is a summary of the funding allocations, for 2024/25. However, more detailed explanations are to be provided in Agenda Item 5.

Alison Jeffery

Director Childrens Services

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Appendix A

DSG Summary 2024/25	Schools	Central School Services	High Needs	Early Years	Total
Total DSG including Academies	£367,230,200	£4,456,800	£86,976,600	£29,149,000	£487,812,600
2 Year Old / Under 2's Funding Entitlement	£0	£0	£0	£16,377,500	£16,377,500
Total Funding Available	£367,230,200	£4,456,800	£86,976,600	£45,526,500	£504,190,100

Appendix B

Schools Block 2024/25	£	£	Comments
Schools Block DfE notification		367,230,200	
Adjusted Schools Block Total 2024/25		367,230,200	
Distribution of Funding at LA Level			
Growth Fund			
Key Stage 1 top up	474,100		Approved by Schools Forum 17 Nov '23
Additional Classes	550,300		
New Schools - Dis-economies of scale funding	14,000		
		1,038,400	
Falling Rolls Fund		0	Unspent funds being carried forward from 2023/24. (As per 17 Nov '23 School
Funds allocated to Schools & Academies		366,191,800	
Total		367,230,200	

Schools Block 2023/24	£	£
Schools Block DfE notification		350,987,700
Adjusted Schools Block Total 2023/24		350,987,700
Distribution of Funding at LA Level		
Growth Fund		
Key Stage 1 top up	586,000	
Additional Classes	488,000	
New Schools - Dis-economies of scale funding	28,000	
Less c/fwd from 2022/23	-117,000	
		985,000
Falling Rolls Fund		0
Funds allocated to Schools & Academies		350,002,700
Total		350,987,700

Appendix C

Central School Services Block 2024/25	£	Comments
Central Schools Services Block notification	4,456,800	
Central School Services Block Total 2024/25	4,456,800	
Historic Commitments (HC)	0	
Funds to transfer to Schools & Academies (Apr)	2,016,900	Approved by Schools Forum 17 Nov '23
On-going Responsibilities	2,439,900	Approved by Schools Forum 17 Nov '23
Total	4,456,800	

Central School Services Block 2023/24	£
Central School Services Block notification	4,897,900
Central School Services Block Total 2023/24	4,897,900
Historic Commitments (HC)	0
Funds Transferred to Schools & Academies	2,521,100
On-going Responsibilities	2,376,800
	4,897,900

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2024/2025	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Block total (From DfE)	86,976,600	
Distribution of Funding at LA Level		86,976,600
Funding for Commissioned Places		
Special Academy place funding (Pre 16)	11,769,200	
Maintained Special School place funding (Pre 16)	1,100,000	
Academy Special Facilities place funding (Pre 16)	723,100	
Maintained Special Facilities place funding (Pre 16)	666,000	
Maintained Special Schools place funding (Post 16)	210,000	
Special Academy place funding (Post 16)	650,000	
Post 16 FE Places	1,444,000	
Alternative Provision	1,400,000	17,962,300
Other High Needs Budgets		
Top up funding Pre 16	28,383,100	
Top up funding Post 16	2,753,000	
Fees for pupils at independent schools	21,500,000	
Education out of School	3,205,700	
SEN support	13,172,500	69,014,300
Total		86,976,600

Appendix D

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2023/2024	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Block total (From DfE)	82,937,600	
Distribution of Funding at LA Level		82,937,600
Funding for Commissioned Places		
Special Academy place funding (Pre 16)	10,833,300	
Maintained Special School place funding (Pre 16)	1,020,000	
Academy Special Facilities place funding (Pre 16)	687,300	
Maintained Special Facilities place funding (Pre 16)	530,000	
Maintained Special Schools place funding (Post 16)	210,000	
Special Academy place funding (Post 16)	650,000	
Post 16 FE Places	1,242,000	
Alternative Provision	1,400,000	16,572,600
Other High Needs Budgets		
Top up funding Pre 16	26,733,800	
Top up funding Post 16	2,753,000	
Fees for pupils at independent schools	20,500,000	
Education out of School	3,205,700	
SEN support	13,172,500	66,365,000
Total		82,937,600

Appendix E

Early Years Block 2024/25	£	£
3/4 Year Old Entitlement	28,289,700	
2 Year old funding entitlement	11,617,600	
Under 2 Funding Entitlement	4,759,900	
Pupil Premium funding	564,400	
Disability Access Fund	294,900	
Early Years block total 2024/25		45,526,500
LA Central Budgets		
Early Years Formula Funding (Payments to PVI's and Schools)	44,591,200	
Early Years Team (Which includes training & moderation)	935,300	
Total		45,526,500

Early Years Block 2023/24	£	£
3/4 Year Old Entitlement	24,409,300	
2 Year old funding	3,863,800	
Under 2 Funding Entitlement	0	
Pupil Premium funding	303,600	
Disability Access Fund	162,300	
Early Years block total 2023/24		28,739,000
LA Central Budgets		
Early Years Formula Funding (Payments to PVI's and Schools)	27,803,700	
Early Years Team (Which includes training & moderation)	935,300	
Total		28,739,000

Report to: East Sussex Schools Forum

Date: 12 January 2024

Title of Report: Early Years Funding Reforms

By: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report: To update Schools Forum on the government's early years funding reforms.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is asked to note the changes to the early years education entitlements as a result of the government's early years funding reforms, which will take effect in stages from April 2024 to September 2025 and approve the Early Years DSG Budget.

1. Introduction

1.1 In the government's spring budget in March 2023, the Chancellor announced reforms to childcare for parents, children, the economy, and women. This includes new early years funding streams to provide working families access to funded childcare places for children aged 9 months to two years old.

1.2 By September 2025, eligible working families will be able to access 30 hours of funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year. This offer is in line with the Extended 30 hours offer already in place for eligible three- and four-year-olds. To ensure fair distribution of funding across all age ranges the DfE has introduced a new Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) from April 2024. The new formula will distribute funding entitlements for children aged two and under, building on the existing formula used to fund the three- and four-year-old entitlements.

1.3 The new framework outlines how councils will be expected to pass funding on to providers. Councils will have support and flexibility to deliver the childcare offers whilst ensuring funding reaches providers in a fair and transparent way.

2. Changes

2.1 From April 2024, early years funding will now include funding of 15 hours, for 38 weeks of the year, for two year olds of working parents as well as eligible disadvantaged two year olds. From September 2024, children aged 9 months plus of working parents will also be eligible to claim 15 hours, 38 weeks a year of funded childcare. From September 2025, the offer to working parents of children aged 9 months plus will be eligible to the full 30-hour offer.

2.2 From April 2024 the funding formula across all age groups will include a statutory deprivation supplement, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF) payments.

2.3 Councils will also be required to expand their Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to include children aged 9 months to two years old who are taking up the funded entitlements.

2.4 From April 2024, all monies received via the Dedicated Schools Grant for early education childcare places for eligible children aged two years old and above, moving to 9 months plus from September 2024 will be included in the EYNFF. All funded age groups will have a statutory deprivation supplement and SENIF.

3. Funding rates

3.1 For 2024/25, the DfE are increasing the national minimum base funding rate for three and four-year olds to £5.70 per hour, a £0.32 per hour increase. The Council is proposing to pass the full £0.32 per hour increase on to providers. This increase, along with a supplementary grant paid in September 2023, increases the hourly rate for three and four-year-olds in East Sussex to £5.42 per hour. This equates to a pass-through rate of 95% of the base rate, in line with DfE requirements. The funding rate in East Sussex remains under the national average base rate of £5.88 per hour.

3.2 For 2024/25, East Sussex will continue to passport through 100% of funding received through DSG to support disadvantaged eligible two years olds and two-year-olds whose parents are in employment. The base rate of £8.37 equates to an increase of £0.23 per hour on the rates updated in September 2023. On top of the base rate there will be a statutory deprivation supplement and SENIF. This equates to 100% pass-through to children in this age range.

3.3 The national funding rate for under twos, whose parents are in employment, will be £11.15 per hour base rate from September 2024. On top of the base rate there will be a statutory deprivation supplement and SENIF. This equates to 100% pass-through to children in this age range. This enables providers to engage in the DfE funding expansion projects to provide funded places for working parents of children aged two and under and reflects the commitment of the local authority to support economic growth for families in East Sussex.

3.4 The EYPP payment is additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide to disadvantaged children. Historically EYPP has only been paid to three- and four-year-olds but in the 2024/25 financial year this will include eligible children aged 9 months plus. The EYPP rate for 2024/25 will be £0.68 per hour for each eligible child, per year.

3.5 The DAF is for early years settings to support children with disabilities or special educational needs. It aids access to early years places by supporting providers to make reasonable adjustments to their settings. The DAF rate for 2024/25 will be £910 per eligible child, per year.

3.6 During the summer of 2023, the local authority's Early Years Funding team consulted with providers on whether to continue to use IDACI as the measure of deprivation to inform the statutory deprivation supplement or use EYPP as the indicator. The outcome of the consultation was to use EYPP as a more robust indicator

of need. However due to the changes in the EYNFF of funding children aged 9 months plus and having no historic data to use on this cohort, we will continue to use IDACI as the indicator for the deprivation supplement across all age groups for 2024/25. We will consult again with providers on this issue during the summer 2024 funding period.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 In conclusion, Schools Forum is asked to note the changes to the early years education entitlements as a result of the government's early years funding reforms, which will take effect in stages from April 2024 to September 2025 and approve the Early Years DSG Budget.

Alison Jeffery
Director Childrens Services

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