

Report to: **East Sussex Schools Forum**
Date: **17 November 2023**
Title of Report: **Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund**
By: **Gary Langford, Senior Manager School Organisation and Admissions**
Purpose of Report: **To update Schools Forum on spend in the 2023/24 financial year and to seek approval for funding in the 2024/25 financial year.**

Recommendation:
Schools Forum is asked to approve an allocation of £1,038,400 for the 2024/25 Growth Fund.

1. Introduction

1.1 The 2023/24 Growth and Falling Rolls Funds were approved by Schools Forum on 18 November 2022.

1.2 The Growth Fund supports maintained and non-maintained mainstream schools which are required to provide extra places to meet basic need within the local authority. The fund is provided for:

- Key Stage 1 top-up: paid to schools to enable them to comply with Key Stage 1 class size legislation, which sets a maximum class size of 30 pupils with one teacher. There are a few exceptions where class sizes can exceed 30, but there is no entitlement to Growth Fund, for example, arising from admissions through the Fair Access Protocol.
- Additional classes: where the local authority has made a formal request for a school to set up one or more additional classes or requests a permanent increase in a school's Published Admission Number.
- New school funding: when new schools open in a local authority area, they receive pre-opening funding through a formula to cover costs incurred prior to the opening and diseconomy funding to cover costs incurred while the school fills to capacity. The funding decreases year on year as more year groups in the new school are admitted.

1.3 The Falling Rolls Fund is used to support good or outstanding schools that have temporary, but significant, falling rolls, but where local planning data shows the places will be needed in the near future. It is designed to avoid the need for a school to restructure and then recruit again shortly afterwards. The funding is for maintained and non-maintained schools. The circumstances in which a payment is made from the Falling Rolls fund are:

- The school is judged to be good or outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection (this is a mandatory requirement from the DFE).
- The number on roll has dropped by more than 5% between the October 2022 census and the October 2023 census.
- Local planning data (East Sussex County Council pupil forecasting model) predicts that the number on roll will, in October 2025, be equal to or exceed their number on roll as in October 2022.

2. Growth Fund 2023/24

2.1 The Growth Fund budget for 2023/24 is £1,102,000. This is made up of £985,000 approved by Schools Forum on 18 November 2022 and £117,000 carried forward from 2022/23. The budget

was based on estimated Key Stage 1 pupil numbers, the predicted additional classes required for the 2023/24 academic year and the number of new schools that required diseconomy funding.

2.2 In 2023/24, the numbers of schools eligible for either Key Stage 1 top-up funding, additional class funding and new schools funding were:

- 30 primary schools eligible for Key Stage 1 top-up funding
- 1 primary school eligible for additional class funding
- 5 secondary schools eligible for additional class funding
- 1 all-through school eligible for new schools funding

2.3 To date, £1,065,430 of the Growth Fund budget has been spent in 2023/24, leaving a balance of £36,570. In accordance with DfE regulations, the balance is being used to support local schools that have taken additional pupil numbers as a direct result of the proposed closures of Holy Cross CE Primary School on 31 December 2023 and St Pancras Catholic Primary School on 31 August 2024. Therefore, the Growth Fund budget for 2023/24 is fully spent. A summary of the spend in 2023/24 is provided in **Appendix A**.

3. Growth Fund 2024/25

3.1 The proposed allocation for 2024/25 is based on the following assumptions:

- Key Stage 1 top-up funding: the estimated October 2023 pupil numbers and the estimated Key Stage 1 numbers as in October 2024. A 10% contingency has been added to the top-up element to allow for any unforeseen changes.
- Additional class funding: the predicted need for places identified through the annual update to the pupil forecasting model, most recently updated in July 2023 and available in the impending School Organisation Plan 2023 to 2027. A 10% contingency has been added to the additional class element to allow for any unanticipated pressures.
- New school funding: one school being eligible for funding.
- Further support for local schools as a direct result of the proposed closures of Holy Cross CE Primary School and St Pancras Catholic Primary School. Any balance remaining at the final closure of the school accounts, will be transferred to the Growth Fund in accordance with DfE regulations.

3.2 It is currently estimated that the following numbers of schools will be eligible for Growth Fund support in 2024/25:

- 28 primary schools potentially eligible for Key Stage 1 top-up funding
- 1 primary school eligible for additional class funding
- 5 secondary schools potentially eligible for additional class funding
- 1 all-through school eligible for additional class funding and new schools funding

3.3 In total, the Growth Fund requirement for 2024/25 is £1,038,400. A breakdown of the Growth Fund calculation for 2024/25 is provided in **Appendix B**. The updated Growth Fund guidance document for 2024/25 will be available online ahead of the new financial year.

4. Falling Rolls Fund 2023/24 and 2024/25

4.1 The Falling Rolls Fund budget for 2023/24 is £42,000. No schools qualify for the fund in 2023/24, so we propose carrying forward the budget in its entirety to 2024/25. As a result, we do not require any additional funding for the Falling Rolls Fund next year.

4.2 The updated Falling Rolls Fund guidance document for 2024/25 will be available online ahead of the new financial year.

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1 In conclusion, the report updates Schools Forum on Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund spending in the 2023/24 financial year and sets out the rationale for funding in 2024/25.

5.2 Accordingly, Schools Forum is recommended to approve an allocation of **£1,038,400** for the 2024/25 Growth Fund.

Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund summary 2023/24

School	Total
Hankham Primary School	£10,013
Laughton Community Primary School	£12,760
St Michael's Primary School, Withyham	£39,190
Manor Primary School	£17,722
Beckley CE Primary School	£3,950
Burwash CE Primary School	£25,975
Forest Row CE Primary School	£21,569
High Hurstwood CE Primary School	£7,443
Southover CE Primary School	£12,760
Ninfield CE Primary School	£18,165
St Michael's CE Primary School, Playden	£12,582
Salehurst CE Primary School	£10,013
Firle CE Primary School	£25,975
Bodiam CE Primary School	£43,595
Iford & Kingston CE Primary School	£30,380
Staplecross Methodist Primary School	£3,950
Framfield CE Primary School	£8,355
St Mark's CE Primary School, Hadlow Down	£16,329
St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School, Hartfield	£12,760
All Saints' and St Richard's CE Primary School	£2,304
Little Horsted CE Primary School	£25,975
Mark Cross CE Primary School	£30,380
Groombridge St Thomas' CE Primary School	£21,571
Heron Park Primary Academy	£17,722
West St Leonard's Primary Academy	£10,013
The Baird Primary Academy	£7,443
Robsack Wood Primary Academy	£6,838
Ditchling (St Margarets) CE Primary School	£28,000
Northiam CE Primary School	£3,283
St Paul's CE Academy, St Leonard's-on-Sea	£9,142
Christ Church CE Primary School	£10,013
TOTAL KS1 Top Up funding April 2023 to March 2024	£506,170
Wivelsfield Primary School	£39,260
Willingdon Community School	£48,000
Beacon Academy	£150,000
Hailsham Community College	£164,000
Seaford Head School	£48,000
Seahaven Academy	£82,000
TOTAL Additional Class funding April 2023 to March 2024	£531,260
Hailsham Community College	£28,000
TOTAL New School funding April 2023 to March 2024	£28,000
Funding to support pupils from closing schools	£36,570
TOTAL SPENT 2023/24	£1,102,000

Growth Fund requirement 2024/25

Funding type	Funding required
Key Stage 1 top-up funding	£474,100
Additional class funding	£550,300
New school funding	£14,000
Total funding required in 2024/25	£1,038,400

Falling Rolls Fund requirement 2024/25

Funding type	Funding required
Carry forward from 2023/24	£42,000
Additional funding required in 2024/25	£0
Allocation in 2024/25	£42,000