
Meeting of the Schools Forum - 16 January 2024

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Pupil Growth Fund 2023/24 and 2024/25

Purpose

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest financial information regarding funding allocated from the pupil growth fund contingency for 2023/24 financial year and the new growth funding allocation received in the National Funding Formula for 2024/25 financial year.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

2. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: The Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
3. The Local Authority proposes, and Schools Forum decides on the criteria for allocating growth funding to meet requirements for basic need including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs. The criteria and methodology are agreed annually by Schools Forum and are detailed in Table 2 for information.

Recommendation

4. Schools Forum is requested to note the latest financial information regarding funding allocated from the pupil growth fund contingency for 2023/24 financial year and the growth fund allocation received in the National Funding Formula for 2024/25 financial year.

Background

5. Authorities have a statutory duty under section 13(1) of the 1996 Act to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education places are available to meet the needs of the population in their area, promoting high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity, promote diversity, and increase parental choice.
6. In order to meet the demand for additional places, certain schools have been identified for expansion. The schools that have been selected are those that satisfied a number of criteria including whether the school was in the right geographical location, whether it was popular with local families, whether it was easy to add more capacity and whether it was well placed to provide a good education to additional pupils.
7. Growth funding enables local authorities to support schools with significant in-year pupil growth which is not otherwise immediately recognised by the lagged funding system.
8. From 2019/20 the DfE have introduced a formulaic approach to allocating growth funding to local authorities which is based on actual growth experienced in the academic year.
9. The criteria for eligibility and any funding methodology to be applied require approval of Schools Forum on an annual basis. This was agreed at the Schools Forum meeting on 4 October 2022 for the 2023/24 allocations and on the 14 November 2023 for the 2024/25 allocations.
10. The growth fund allocated to the Local Authority for 2023/24 financial year is £906,325.
11. Funding of £1,076,801.25 has now been allocated to 7 schools in respect of an additional 323 pupils for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 March 2024. The deficit of £170,476.25 will be transferred to the DSG contingency reserve for 2023/24. The allocation is in accordance with the approved criteria and funding methodology for pupils on roll at October 2023 School Census.
12. Table 1 provides detail of allocations made to individual schools for 2023/24:

Table 1 – Allocations made to schools for 2023/24

Dudley School	Pupils funded as per eligibility criteria	Funding allocated 2023/24
		£
Secondary:		
Leasowes Community College	47	156,686.25
Kingswinford Academy	25	83,343.75
The Earls High School	43	143,351.25
The Link Academy	46	153,352.50
The Crestwood School	33	110,013.75
St James Academy	58	193,357.50
The Wordsley School	71	236,696.25
Total	323	1,076,801.25

13. For 2024/25, the DfE have continued to allocate growth funding to Local Authorities based on actual growth in pupil numbers experienced in the previous year.
14. For 2024/25 the growth fund allocation is £1,464,770.
15. The eligibility criteria and funding methodology for the allocation of growth funding for 2024/25 were agreed by Schools Forum on 14 November 2023 as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Criteria and Methodology for allocating Growth Fund

Criteria

Additional funding will be made available to Dudley schools in any of the circumstances:

- The local authority carries out a formal consultation and approves an increase in the capacity of a school in accordance with School Organisation legislation.
- The local authority requests schools to increase their published admission numbers (PAN) as necessary and publishes on behalf of maintained schools an increased PAN in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code.
- The local authority requests schools to admit significant additional pupils as a consequence of a school closure.
- The local authority requests a school to admit pupils above its PAN to meet localised demand.

- No allocation will be made to a school where the school admits over PAN at their own choice.
- The local authority has agreed with a school to provide an extra class to meet the basic need in the area.

Methodology

- Additional funding will be made available in relation to additional pupils admitted to the relevant school in Reception and Year 7 as recorded on October School Census, until such time as the increase is reflected in all year groups.
- Additional funding will be allocated only to those schools where the number of additional pupils admitted is greater than 10.
- Funding will be based on a reconciliation between year 6/11 leavers and reception/year 7 intake.
- October census data will be used to complete the reconciliation.
- The allocation will be based upon the growth fund allocation from the DfE.
- The allocations will be restricted to a maximum amount per pupil equivalent to 7/12ths of the Minimum per Pupil Funding (£4,610 and £5,995 for primary and secondary school pupils respectively for 2024/25).

*This will reflect the period September to March for maintained schools and from September to August for academy schools.

**To note that growth fund payments to Academies for the period April to August will be funded by the ESFA.

HTCF - Budget Working Group Discussed - Yes - 9 January 2024.

Finance

16. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

17. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

18. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school

community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

Risk Management

19. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

20. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources /Organisational Development

21. This report has no direct implications for organisational development, human resources or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

22. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment / Climate Change

23. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

Council Priorities and Projects

24. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer:

James Wilson, Senior Principal Accountant

Telephone: 01384 815864

Email: james.wilson@dudley.gov.uk