

**Education Resources Group
Schools Forum**

**Meeting Date 28 November 2023
Meeting Date 6 December 2023**

**Subject: School Funding Arrangements – 2023/24 and Responses to
Consultation**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Abdullahi

Report Number: 12

Item: 5b

Purpose of Report

1. This report details:

- A summary of responses received to proposals contained in the consultation document on the transfer and use of the 0.5% from the Schools to the High Needs block for 2024/25;
- Proposals for providing supplementary funding to special schools for pupils requiring additional support above the upper threshold;
- Arrangements for reviewing special school place funding;
- Requirements on consulting proposals for the local early years formula.

Recommendations

2. The Schools Forum are asked to:

- Consider the request and confirm agreement to the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools to the High Needs block to support schools with above the calculated average number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs);
- Consider and comment on the request from special schools for supplementary funding and a review of special school funding;
- Note the possibility of a consultation on early years funding arrangements being carried out during the Spring term.

Relevance to the Council's Corporate Plan

3. The Council has an oversight of the DSG and is responsible for the management and allocation of funding to all schools in their area. The Council has to ensure the local arrangements are in line with the regulations governing school funding and aim to meet the needs of Enfield's children and young people (CYP).

Main Consideration for the Schools Forum

4. BACKGROUND

At the last meeting, the Forum was asked to confirm their support for consulting on the 0.5% transfer from the Schools to the High Needs block to support schools with high number of pupils with EHCPs.

In addition, following a discussion with special school, it has been requested that consideration be given to some changes to the arrangements for special schools funding. Separately, a review be carried out of the special school place funding arrangements implemented in September 2022 because of the change in need of the pupils attending special schools.

This report provides a summary of responses received and seeks the Forum's views and agreement on the proposed 0.5% transfer from the Schools block for 2024/25. As well as outlining the proposals in relation to special school funding.

5. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON 0.5% TRANSFER FROM SCHOOLS TO HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

- 5.1 Schools were asked to respond on the proposal to transfer 0.5% funding from the Schools to the High Needs Block to support schools with an above calculated average of pupils with ECHP. The proposal sought no changes to the current methodology for calculating and allocating the funding.
- 5.2 The consultation document was published on 23 October 2023. By the deadline of Friday 17th November, no responses had been received.
- 5.3 The lead representatives of the primary and secondary headteachers' associations, who are also members of this Forum, were contacted to advise them that no responses had been received and whether their sector still supported the proposal to transfer 0.5% from the Schools to the High Needs Block. It was confirmed that the sectors still supported the transfer of 0.5%.
- 5.4 The Forum are advised that the calculation for informing the average will not include pupils in Additionally Resourced Provision or Special Units.
- 5.5 Therefore, with the support of the two sectors, the Forum is asked to confirm their agreement to the 0.5% transfer from the Schools to High Needs block to support schools with above a calculated number of pupils with EHCPs.

6. SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACE FUNDING

- 6.1 During 2021/2022, independent consultants were engaged to carry out reviews of the place funding arrangements and assess the financial position and type of needs supported at each special school.
- 6.2 Following discussion of possible funding models, it was agreed that an activity based average cost model should be used as the basis for funding for special schools, that considered:
 - Expenditure on classroom staffing requirements for pupils with different levels of need;
 - Expenditure on other staffing including leadership teams and administrative staff;
 - Non staffing costs, for example on premises and resources;
 - Any significant school-specific costs.
- 6.3 Modelling was undertaken based on the profile of pupil needs at each school, assumptions about the adult/pupil ratio required for different levels of needs and analysis of actual costs incurred, as well as moderating the analysis using financial benchmarking data for other similar schools.
- 6.5 The Independent Consultant in determining costs used actual data on staffing and non-staffing costs across the special schools in 2020/21, which was the latest data available. An average classroom teacher salary of £57,502 (UPS1) and average TA salary of £24,705 was used as the basis of calculation. These were the local average salaries ascertained through the expenditure analysis.
- 6.6 To inform the financial model and associated costs, an audit was carried out in each special school to assess the range of pupil needs that were met by the school against a set of agreed level descriptors at the time of the review. This audit was subject to quality

assurance and was agreed to be a fair and reasonable reflection of the range of needs at each school. The level descriptors are attached as Appendix 1.

- 6.7 Following some adjustments to protect small schools and cap larger schools, as well as any adjustments from the audit, Table 1 summarises the change in place funding that were presented and supported by the Forum.

Table 1: Summary of changes in special school place funding rates

School	Basic top up	Pay & Pension grant	Total top up	New rate
Durants	£14,000	797	14,797	15,985
Fern House	£15,101	726	15,827	17,496
Oaktree	£9,496	726	10,222	10,433
Russet House	£12,875	781	13,656	15,001
Waverley	£15,478	726	16,204	17,802
West Lea	£8,781	803	9,584	9,798

The new rates excluded the 2023/24 supplementary pay grant and were implemented from September 2022.

- 6.8 The special school headteachers have stated, since the audit, pupil needs have changed and they consider some pupils to be above the highest descriptor level. They have requested a mechanism that enables school to access supplementary funding for pupils above the highest level descriptor be introduced and also another pupil audit be carried out. In addition, they viewed the place funding rates for their schools to be insufficient to meet the costs associated in supporting pupils at their schools.
- 6.8 The Authority view is to separately assess each element of the issues raised by the special school headteachers.

(a) Additional Support for Pupils Above the Highest Descriptor Level

It is proposed that an amount from the High Needs block is earmarked to fund pupils to be supported above the highest descriptor level. Any requests for additional funding is assessed by a panel that consists of a special school headteacher, officers from the SEN Service and, where appropriate, other lead professionals. The rationale for introducing a panel is to ensure consistency and fairness when considering individual requests.

The Forum are advised that the formation of this panel and consequent allocation of additional funds will add further pressure to the High Needs block.

(b) Pupil Audit

The Authority is looking to engage an independent consultant to carry out the pupil audit as this will ensure transparency and fairness.

(c) Place Funding Review

Following the pupil audit and if there are no further updates on the national place funding system, it is proposed that an independent consultant carries out a place funding review.

6. As last year, information relating to the Early Years block has not yet been published, therefore it is unclear if a consultation on the Early Years NFF will be required. The current presumption is that a consultation may be required early in the Spring term when confirmation has been received of the arrangements in relation to the proxy indicators to be used and associated data to inform the NFF and also whether all or some of the one-off early years supplementary grant paid will be added to the NFF.

Main Considerations for the Schools Forum and Council

7. The local arrangements for delegating funding to schools are in line with statutory, national and local requirements.

Financial Implications

8. The recommendations in this report will be subject to the resources available. The final position will not be available until the DfE have published the budget settlement for 2023/24.

Conclusions and Recommendations

9. The Forum are asked to:
 - (a) Note and confirm their support to the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools to the High Needs block.
 - (b) Note the proposals in relation to special schools funding and confirm their support to:
 - The proposal to form a panel to consider requests for supplementary money for pupils requiring support above the highest descriptor level;
 - Engage an independent consultant to carry out an audit of pupil needs at each special school;
 - If required, engage an independent consultant to carry out a place funding review.
 - (c) Note the possibility of a consultation on early years funding arrangements being carried out during the Spring term.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers:

School funding regulations and DfE operational and guidance documents

School funding consultation document and responses

Schools Forum and Education Resources Group reports from previous meetings

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Level 1:

Pupils at Level 1 will have moderate learning and cognition difficulties. They will have much greater difficulties than their peers in acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and social skills. Their understanding of concepts will be poor. They may have associated speech, language and communication difficulties and/or behaviour difficulties potentially leading to disruption. Their learning difficulties may be complicated by additional sensory or physical impairments.

Attainments will be significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum. They are likely to be working at pre-National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and at early National curriculum levels at Key Stage 2 and secondary. Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, pupils will be assessed as significantly below average, below the 2nd percentile.

Pupils at Level 1 will require the following provision:

- A broad, subject-based curriculum significantly differentiated and personalised, which emphasises the development of literacy, numeracy, social and communication skills
- Practical learning experiences to help generalise skills into real life settings/situations
- Teaching by staff with appropriate specialist expertise and training in planning and delivering programmes for pupils with SEND
- A structured and supportive environment which will promote social independence and independent learning
- Support/advice from external agencies may be required, with support programmes being carried out by staff in school
- A suitable learning environment with adapted resources and equipment
- A staffing ratio of generally no greater than 1:8 giving opportunities for occasional individual and small group support, as required

Level 2

Pupils at Level 2 will have moderate cognition and learning difficulties and they will also have a high level of additional needs.

As for Level 1, pupils at level 2 will have attainment significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, at pre-National Curriculum or early National Curriculum levels dependent on age. Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, pupils will be assessed as significantly below average, below the 2nd percentile.

Pupils at Level 2 will have other significant factors in addition to their cognitive and learning difficulties, which will greatly impact on their ability learn and to make progress. These factors may include one or a combination of the following:

- Behaviour and social/emotional needs
- Significant social/communication needs which may include a diagnosis of autism
- Physical, sensory or medical needs requiring regular support
- Significant speech, language and communication needs, as assessed by a speech and language therapist
- Personal care needs

Pupils at Level 2 may also have SEMH as their primary need. They will show challenging behaviour and difficulties in social interaction with adults and other children. They will need support to manage their own behaviour and reflect on the consequences for others. In some cases, they will have poor self confidence as a learner and a low level of self-esteem, making

them emotionally vulnerable. They may require planned support for mental health difficulties, requiring therapeutic intervention and/or medication to assist emotional regulation.

In addition to the provision at Level 1, pupils at Level 2 will typically require the following:

- Specialist programmes to address additional needs, including behaviour programmes and language/communication programmes
- Advice and intervention from a range of therapists or external agencies may be required which will need to be delivered through regular individual or small group support
- Multi-agency planning across school, home and care settings
- A secure and safe school environment with enhanced staffing for out of school activities
- Planned health and safety measures in place throughout the day
- Staff trained in specialist approaches including supporting pupils with additional medical needs, social and communication needs and social, emotional and mental health needs
- A staffing ratio of generally no greater than no greater than 1:4 which may include occasional 1:1 support to deliver specialist programmes and/or manage challenging behaviour

Level 3

Pupils at Level 3 have a range of needs as follows:

- Pupils with autism as their primary need. They are likely to experience sustained difficulties in social interaction which may lead to challenging and inappropriate behaviours with adults and other children. They may have severe impairment in the functional use of language. They are likely to have high levels of stress impacting on learning and ability to cope in social situations as well as lack of flexibility in thinking and resistance to change. They will have low levels of attainment across the curriculum as for pupils at Levels 1 and 2, or an inconsistent, spiky profile of needs
- Pupils who have severe cognitive impairments. They are likely to have associated difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication and the acquisition of personal and social independence skills. At pre-school level, functioning will normally be below half of their chronological age on most areas of development. Pupils of school age are likely to be working to at pre national curriculum levels during their primary years or beyond. Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, pupils will be assessed as below the 1st percentile.
- Pupils who have severe physical difficulties and associated learning needs. They are likely to have complex needs including the requirement for medical intervention. They may have limited personal care skills and are likely to have a lifelong disability. They may have associated neurological problems and a range of cognition and learning needs. Some will have severe communication difficulties and may require alternative and augmentative communication systems.
- Pupils who have severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties as their primary need. They are likely to show a range of behaviours which, through their nature, persistence and severity, have a significant negative effect on their learning, emotional wellbeing and social interaction. They may have been diagnosed with mental health difficulties or other medical conditions, requiring treatment and specialist multi-agency support.

In addition to provision at Level 2, pupils at Level 3 will typically require the following:

- Significant adaptations to teaching and learning approaches in all areas of the curriculum
- Daily individual and small group teaching by teachers with specialist training and experience
- Concepts and skills will need to be taught systematically in multiple contexts
- Specialist teaching areas including therapy rooms and adapted outdoor areas
- Some pupils will require access to a soft play area, sensory room or hydrotherapy pool
- Some pupils, particularly those with ASD, will require a setting where distractions are reduced, where there is a predictable routine and an emphasis on a visual aspect to learning
- Some pupils will require specialised equipment and communication aids
- Some pupils will require high levels of support in structured and unstructured settings to maintain the health and safety of themselves and others
- Many pupils will require regular therapy support in order to ensure an integrated education/therapy provision; some will need access to medical staff throughout the day
- An overall staffing ratio of generally no greater than 1:2.3 giving opportunities for regular individual support, as required

Level 4

Most pupils at Level 4 have profound and multiple learning difficulties. They will have cognitive, sensory and/or physical impairments which will have a major effect on their ability to engage in the process of learning. They are likely to have associated difficulties in the development of communicative competence and may display highly challenging behaviour. This will include pupils with:

- Multi-sensory impairments
- Complex and possibly life-threatening medical needs
- Unstable and unpredictable behaviour associated with their impairment or medical condition

Some pupils at Level 4 will have severe learning difficulties or autism as their primary need coupled with a high level of additional needs and challenging behaviour. They are likely to require intensive support to manage their emotional regulation and to keep themselves and others safe.

In addition to the provision at Level 3, pupils at Level 4 will typically require the following:

- Skilled and intensive intervention throughout the school day from appropriately trained adults with experience in working with pupils with high level needs
- A specialist learning environment that allows adequate floor space, storage, acoustic and lighting
- Appropriate hygiene and changing facilities including use of hoists where required
- Frequent therapy support to ensure an integrated therapy/education provision
- A high level of co-ordinated multi-agency support is likely to be required
- Some pupils will require significant medical support such as gastrostomy and tracheotomy care from trained and experienced staff
- Some pupils will require communication aids and staff trained in alternative and augmentative education

- An overall staffing ratio of generally no more than 1:1.75 with regular 1:1 support to deliver specialist programmes, manage unpredictable/challenging behaviour and/or to manage personal care needs

Level 5

Pupils at Level 5 will require even more intensive and frequent support to keep themselves and others safe. They will have complex cognitive, sensory, social communication and/or physical needs which have a major effect on their ability to engage in the process of learning. In addition, they will have severe social, emotional and mental health needs, frequently displaying behaviours that challenge and which places themselves or others at significant risk of physical harm. They will require frequent intervention from specialist therapeutic services.

In addition to the provision at Level 4, they will typically require the following:

- Constant monitoring, support, care and supervision to manage the safety of themselves and others
- A highly individualised learning environment and carefully managed small group or individual teaching throughout the day
- To maintain safety, physical intervention is likely to be required on a regular basis, involving more than one adult. Without such support, their severe and complex needs may give rise to significant harm to themselves or others, or even life-threatening situations. Staff will need to be trained appropriately in emergency situations and in a range of specialist teaching strategies and interventions
- A specialist adapted learning environment will be required giving access to one to one teaching areas and secure outdoor play areas
- A very high level of multi-agency planning and support is likely to be required involving medical/nursing services, therapy services, social care, psychology services and/or specialist CAMHS services
- An overall staffing ratio of generally no more than 1:1.4 giving frequent opportunities for individual support throughout the day