

Schools Forum

11 January 2024

Pupil Growth Fund 2024/25

This report is for decision and relates to all representatives.

Recommendations

That funding from the 2024/25 DSG Schools Block of £3.599m is allocated to the Pupil Growth Fund to support the requirements outlined in this report:

- a. Proposed revisions to the pupil growth funding criteria.
- b. Estimated growth funding required for 2024/25 to support pupil growth in existing provision and the opening of new provision.
- c. Where there is insufficient funding to support allocations described in this report, the level of protection funding for schools will be scaled back accordingly.

Schools Forum are asked to note that an allocation of the DSG Schools Block to the Pupil Growth Fund is part of the National Funding Formula that Schools Forum have agreed to implement. The Formula provides a guideline figure for the funding allocation, which is broadly based on past trends, and this has been utilised to calculate the recommended level of transfer within this report alongside estimated growth requirements. If Schools Forum were to not support these recommendations, then Schools Forum would not be following the National Funding Formula as previously agreed and would adversely impact both place sufficiency across the County, as well as the ability of schools to fund necessary growth.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Warwickshire Education Strategy (2018-2023) sets out the County Council's aspirations and priorities for Education in Warwickshire. Within this strategy Priority WE3 aims to ensure all learners enjoy a high-quality learning experience.
- 1.2. In this context, the [Education Sufficiency Strategy \(2018-2023\)](#) accompanied by the [Annual Sufficiency Update](#) aims to help schools, parents, council officers, local partners and stakeholders understand how Warwickshire County Council plans for and anticipates the growth in demand for places ensuring that all children and young people thrive in sustainably good or outstanding schools and settings throughout their education, wherever they live in Warwickshire.
- 1.3. The Local Authority is responsible for providing sufficient school places.

- 1.4. Warwickshire is experiencing significant growth within many parts of the county, with larger primary cohorts now entering secondary provision and large-scale housing development building out and proposed to continue to build out across the county over the next 15 years and beyond. As development progresses across the county there will be the need for the delivery of new provision and the expansion of existing provision during the next 5 years and effective planning for further new provision beyond that period. One new primary school and an all through school opened in September 2023 with another new primary due to open in September 2024.
- 1.5. The growth fund can be used to support schools which are required to provide extra pre-16 places to meet basic need within the authority, including the pre-opening and post opening costs of new schools and reorganisation costs.
- 1.6. Funding for growth is allocated to the Local Authority separately within the National Funding Formula and calculated based on actual pupil growth between the annual October censuses. Allocations for 2024-25 were announced on 19 December 2024 and have been based on the increases between October 2022 and 2023 pupil census data. The finalised available amount to support pupil growth is £3.645 million.
- 1.7. For 2023/24 the estimated requirements were circa £3.400 million. The final expenditure is forecast to be circa £3.100 million.

2. Current criteria in Warwickshire for administering Growth Funding

2.1. Primary School (Reception to Year 6)

- 2.1.1. When a primary school agrees to admit an additional class at the request of the LA, they are paid £51,546 for each new class to cover the seven month period before these pupils begin to be funded through the formula based on the October Census. For bulge classes this would be a one-off payment, while for expansions the payment would be made for a maximum of seven years depending on the number of new classes opened. In terms of academies, which are funded on academic year, there is a 12-month period before funding for the additional class is received, therefore an additional £31,105 is paid to academies in April and recouped from the ESFA by the LA.
- 2.1.2. Primary schools that are in the process of expansion, or those that have admitted a bulge class at the request of the LA, also receive protection funding for up to seven years from when an additional class is opened (inclusive of the first year of funding). For the first year of funding, the additional protection funding is based on the primary basic entitlement AWPU figure (£3,562 for 2024/25) and is for 5/12 of the year, as the school would have already received the Pupil Growth Funds to support with first 7/12 of the year¹. In second and subsequent years of funding, if the class has 25 pupils or fewer, the school is eligible to receive AWPU for the difference up to 25 pupils. Where applicable, this protection funding can also be applied to new free

¹ Protection funding in the first year not applicable to academies that received full 12-month growth funding payment.

schools opened via the LA presumption route or through the Central Government Free School Programme.

- 2.1.3. The growth fund can also provide support for those schools undergoing reorganisation, for example, an extension of the age range. Costs incurred can vary considerably, and to ensure an equitable yet flexible approach, each re-organisation will be assessed, and the appropriate method and level of funding agreed follow consultation with the relevant officers.
- 2.1.4. **Proposed uplift to primary growth funding payment:** The LA have reviewed the staffing element of the growth funding in light of the recent pay. A 6.5% uplift has been added to the teacher and teaching assistant salary elements. Therefore, when a primary school agrees to admit an additional class at the request of the LA, they would be paid £53,508 for each new class to cover the seven-month period before these pupils begin to be funded through the formula based on the October Census. For academies, which are funded on academic year, an additional £32,506 is paid in April and recouped from the ESFA by the LA.

2.2. Secondary School (Year 7 to Year 11)

- 2.2.1. When a secondary school agrees to admit an additional form of entry at the request of the LA, they are paid £51,655 for the seven-month period before these pupils begin to be funded through the formula based on the October Census. For bulge classes, this would be a one-off payment, while for expansions the payment would be made for a maximum of five years. For academies, which are funded on academic year, an additional £33,325 is paid to academies in April and recouped from the ESFA by the LA.
- 2.2.2. **Proposed uplift to secondary growth funding payment:** As a result of the recent pay award a 6.5% uplift has been added to the teacher and the teaching assistant salary element.
- 2.2.3. Therefore, when a secondary school agrees to admit an additional class at the request of the LA, they would be paid £53,748 for each new class to cover the seven-month period before these pupils begin to be funded through the formula based on the October Census. For academies, which are funded on academic year, an additional £34,820 is paid in April and recouped from the ESFA by the LA.
- 2.2.4. Following on from the initial growth funding in the first year, in second and subsequent years, protection funding will be paid up to a maximum of 25 pupils per year group. For example, where an additional 30 places are being made available in a year group (on top of the existing PAN), protection funding will be paid on 25 pupils – a school with a PAN of 180 makes places available up to 210 places; protection funding will be provided up to 205 pupils. The protection funding will be based on the Secondary basic entitlement AWPU (24/25 £5,022) and based on the October 2023 Census figure.

2.3. **Proposed addition to growth fund criteria:** To recognise the additional costs incurred for specific very significant changes it is proposed that in the following circumstances a grant of up to £40,000 is made available in the year prior to the change.

- Expansion requires relocation.
- Expansion requires moving onto a split site.
- Expansion involves adding a phase (e.g., Secondary, or primary phase becoming all-through)

The final amount will be dependent on pre agreed expenditure between school/Trust and LA

3. School Pre-Opening and Post Opening Funding

3.1 Under the free school presumption local authorities are required to meet the capital costs of providing the new school and the revenue costs of opening the new provision.

3.2 In providing the revenue support, provision must be made in the LA's growth funds to finance pre-opening development costs and post-opening funding to reflect the additional costs of establishing and operating a new school during the first few years when pupil-led revenue funding is not sufficient to cover the full running costs.

3.3 Pre-Opening Funding (Project Development Grant) – No changes are proposed.

3.3.1 The pre-opening funding is intended to cover revenue costs up to the opening of the school. This can include project management, staff recruitment, salary costs and office and administration costs. The grant is paid in three instalments during the year prior to opening.

3.3.2 The current pre-opening funding grant follows a similar funding level to the project development grant given to new schools opened through the Central Government Free School Programme.

3.3.3 The Project Development Grant proposed by WCC breaks down as follows:

Primary £195,000 (£125,000 if the trust is opening more than one school in an academic year)

Secondary and all-through £275,000 (£175,000 if the trust is opening more than one school in an academic year)

3.3.4 An ICT grant would also be provided to fund the ICT equipment and expenditure not covered by the Capital Build. A grant of up to £50,000 is proposed for Primary Schools and up to £100,000 for a Secondary School.

3.3.5 It should be noted that all LA presumption schools also receive a £25,000 project development grant from the Department for Education.

3.4 Post Opening Funding (New Mainstream Free School) – No changes are proposed.

3.4.1 The current approach follows a similar format to the post opening grant paid by the DfE to free schools opened through the Central Government Free School Programme. There are two elements to the post-opening grant: non-staffing resources paid on a per pupil basis and a leadership grant.

3.4.2 The Resources element: Paid each year that the school builds up to capacity for each new pupil expected to be on roll. It is paid at the following rates:

- £250 for each new mainstream pupil in the primary phase (R to 6)
- £500 for each new mainstream pupil in the secondary and 16 to 19 phases (7 to 13)

3.4.3 The Leadership element: Paid annually based on the number of year groups that the school will ultimately have that do not yet have pupils. The amount paid to mainstream schools depends on how many year groups are empty.

Table 1: Leadership element of post opening grant

Phase	Number of empty year groups						Max
	6+	5	4	3	2	1	
Primary	£80,500	£67,500	£54,000	£40,500	£27,000	£13,500	£283,000
Secondary			£125,000	£93,500	£62,500	£31,000	£312,000
All Through	£125,000	£93,500	£62,500	£54,000	£40,500	£27,000	£402,500

NB. Leadership element not affected by school size or whether there is a sixth form

Table 2: Total Cost*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Max. Total
Primary (1FE)	£88,000	£75,000	£61,500	£48,000	£34,500	£21,000	£7,500	£335,500
Secondary 7 to 11 (6FE)	£215,000	£183,500	£152,500	£121,000	£90,000	-	-	£762,000
All Through 11-16 (1FE primary & 6FE Secondary)	£222,500	£222,500	£222,500	£125,000	£97,500	£7,500	£7,500	£905,000

*Maximum cost assuming school growing 1 year group at a time. Cost would be subject to change depending on the timing of year groups being opened. Funding will be adjusted over the opening period in line with the maximum total paid.

4. Growth Funding requirements for 2024/25

4.1 For 2024/25 the growth funding requirements to support pupil growth in primary and secondary provision and to support the opening of new provision is estimated at £3.599 million (including recoupable amounts); of which:

- £3.228 million is required to support pupil growth in line with the growth funding criteria outlined in this report.
- £0.371 million is required to support the pre-opening and post opening of new LA presumption schools.
- The new rates will be applicable from September 2024

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